

**Adventures in Academic Storytelling:
Using the Tools of Creative Writing to Produce Peer-Reviewed
Academic Research**

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DEDICATION

For Laura and Georgia— they see me as I am and would have me no other way.

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Third, as with all my writing, thanks to Dr. Joe Goecke.

ABSTRACT

This context statement, and the public works submitted with it, demonstrate how the tools of Creative Writing can be successfully used to produce ten articles published in peer-reviewed journals. None of these publications is in the field of Creative Writing; they are in journals that span the academic specialisms of forensics, linguistics, history, policing, law, sculpture, weapons, and literary studies. Not only are the articles published in ten different academic fields, but each one also draws research from a number of distinct academic disciplines. This makes my writing practice more closely aligned with that of a poet, novelist or writer of creative non-fiction, than that of a traditional single-subject academic. While employed in nonacademic fields, I nurtured a second life as a highly successful freelance or 'academically stateless' researcher publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals. I eschewed building a singular focus on one field in favor of building a toolbox of skills from different fields to help me investigate aspects of the world around me. My work follows the tradition of the deep generalist-polymath and the philosophy of transdisciplinary research as it uses and integrates fields. However, my work has a more practical synergy with the Bricoleur-Bowerbird approach to research and production from the field of Creative Writing, and I argue that a Creative Writer's approach to academic research can produce articles that challenge boundaries and dogma to advance our understanding of an ever-complicating world.

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LIST OF PUBLIC WORKS

1. "Dusting the Past: Archaeology and Ancient Fingerprints"
Journal of Forensic Identification - November/December 2002, Vol. 52, No. 6, pages 696-703.
2. "Jukker: A brief note on an instrument noun in Guyanese Creole used to denote a specific improvised weapon"
Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages - Vol. 25:2 (2010) pgs. 345-349.
3. "'An Eye for an Eye': Examining a Cuneiform Inscription on the Nebraska State Capitol"
Sculpture Journal - Vol. 22.1 (2013), pgs. 139-143.
4. "'Stout and Sharp': Theodore Roosevelt's Tiffany-made hunting-knife"
Heritage of the Great Plains - Vol. 46, No. 2 (Winter 2014), pgs. 22-35.
5. "Forced Perspective: Police Officers' Personal Opinions and Racial Data Collection in Nebraska"
Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles - Vol. 87, No. 3, 2014, pgs. 195-200.
6. "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses: A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana"
Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Practice - Vol. 9, No. 12 (December 2014), pgs. 999-1001.
7. "Go with the Flow: Using Anthropology to Expedite the Flow of the Classic Scramble Cafeteria"
Journal of Foodservice Business Research - Vol. 18, No. 2, pgs. 182-187.
8. "The Rats at Fort Clark"
The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal - Vol. 10 (2016), pgs. 37-47.
9. "The Bloomfield Throwing Knife: Analyzing an Improvised Shuriken to Appreciate the Derived Artifact"
Arms & Armour: Journal of the Royal Armouries - Vol. 13, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 62-69.
10. "The Edges of the Empire: The Symbolism of Bladed Weapons in Orwell's *Burmese Days*"
George Orwell Studies - Vol. 1, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 107-115.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO A DOUBLE LIFE

The American poet Muriel Strode once wrote, "I will not follow where the path may lead; instead I will go where there is no path and leave a trail."¹ I have always found myself going "where there is no path". For my Bachelor's degree, I majored in history and minored in anthropology, geology, and political science. I received academic certificates in computer security and forensic science and completed a Master's degree in anthropology focused on Caribbean archaeology.² By pursuing degrees in different fields, I eschewed building a singular understanding of one field in favor of building a toolbox of skills and knowledge from different fields. This trail cutting also evidences something more. For almost two decades, I have lived a double life.

During the day, I grew a career as a solver of complex operational problems in both the public and private sectors. I built a skillset that covered strategic communications, government auditing and oversight, healthcare compliance, business innovation, management assessment, and process improvement. In my free time, I nurtured my second life as a highly successful academic writer who, with no institutional affiliation or hope of reward such as tenure, functioned as a freelance researcher publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Stateless Academic

I have succeeded in being a stateless academic. I have published articles involving but not limited to the following fields: anthropology; archaeology; political science; criminal justice;

¹ Muriel Strode, *My Little Book of Prayer* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1905), 11.

² Don Arp, Jr., "The Aputu: An Examination and Analysis of a War Club-Form Distinctive to the Guianas" (MA thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011).

process improvement; ancient Greek history; linguistics; Cuneiform studies; material culture; design; fan culture; ecology; American history; English literature; architecture/space design; medical ethics; intellectual property law; police procedures; physician culture; sculpture; Egyptology; city planning; forensic science; paleontology; and martial arts history. By 2018, I had over 45 publications to my credit, including one book and over 20 peer-reviewed articles (full list in Appendix A). My published work is cited in three textbooks, referenced in a *New York Times* bestseller, and is required reading in at least one university.³

While I have been successful in terms of publishing research in peer-reviewed journals, my statelessness has had a significant cost. As I led a double life, the part that mattered most to me, and where my true passion rested, was my writing and research. Since high school, I wanted to be a professor, pursuing the research and writing projects that I found stimulating. By refusing to specialize, this door was closed hard on me. I felt I belonged in academia, but I was operating outside the established order of such careers. I knew what the traditional path was and could have followed it, but my research interests just did not fit that course. Therefore, I continued researching and writing in the manner that I felt was so important.

As I continued researching, writing, and publishing, I found myself no closer to an academic career and thought many times of giving it up. My approach to producing research and articles worked. That said, what I needed to do was explore my process and establish it as an effective and needed alternative to research production. In short, I am trying to find where I

³ My article, "Effective Written Reports", is required reading for JUS 235 – Criminal Investigation at Northern Arizona University. [See syllabus here.](#)

belong. This, however, is not the first time I have looked for an academic and methodological home.

Starting in 2001, I pursued a Master's degree in anthropology, specializing in archaeology, for two semesters before leaving the program behind to pursue some life experience. When I returned eight years later to finish the degree, I sought an advisor. The professor I first approached asked me why I was coming back. I said I wanted to finish the degree and get back into the work of investigating and exploring things. He refused to be my advisor and said what I wanted to do was not anthropology, but something more like creative writing or journalism. Looking back, I could not agree more.

It cannot be stated clearly enough: most creative writers, whether of fiction, poetry or nonfiction are researchers. Creative writers are not and do not have to be experts in the different knowledge fields. Instead, like pirates or hoarders, they dive deep enough to take what they need and then create life from what they have found. This aligns closely with my work and the affinity I have with the tradition of the deep generalist-polymath.

Deep Generalists and Polymaths

Recent trends of innovation and problem solving in business have highlighted the need for a shift in thought processes. Methods focused on hyper-specialties are being replaced by methods that enable the connection of seemingly divergent knowledge sources and the provision of impactful strategies and solutions. The leveraging of divergent, multi-field knowledge is the talent of the polymath or "a person of encyclopedic learning".⁴ Kyle Wiens, a noted software and

⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/polymath>

service innovator, wrote “Polymathism is largely [an] untapped force in business practice, but it’s also the future of problem-solving.”⁵ Aytakin Tank, a writer on polymathism, emphasized that “deep generalists”, such as polymaths, will become critical as jobs are increasingly overtaken by artificial intelligence.⁶ Tank wrote, “What roles will be left? Those that require creative problem solving, innovation and humanity.”⁷

Carl Djerassi, a chemistry professor, highly successful creative writer, and co-founder of the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, has long argued for the value of the polymath. Edward Carr, in his examination of Djerassi and polymathism, discussed a troubling trend: “People who know a lot about a lot have long been an exclusive club, but now they are an endangered species.”⁸ This endangered status is due, in part, to criticism leveled against polymathism. Often the first criticism against the polymath is that of dilettantism. I have some experience with this. During my senior year in college, I received the University of Nebraska-Lincoln History Department’s Glenn Gray Memorial Award, an honor bestowed on the department’s most outstanding undergraduate student. During her speech explaining why I had been awarded this honor, the chairperson of the undergraduate program noted I approached much of my work from several angles, but “did not do so as a dilettante but rather with a deep understanding of each perspective.” This was April 2001 and merely touching multiple subjects was seen as academic dabbling. The professor, in order to validate the award, needed to defend the legitimacy of my efforts.

⁵ Kyle Wiens, “In Defense of Polymaths,” May 18, 2012, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2012/05/in-defense-of-polymaths>.

⁶ Aytakin Tank, “Why the world needs deep generalists, not specialists”, November 7, 2018, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://medium.com/swlh/why-the-world-needs-deep-generalists-not-specialists-b7c32e223c70>.

⁷ Tank, “Why the world needs deep generalists, not specialists”

⁸ Edward Carr, “The Last Days of the Polymath”, autumn 2009, accessed December 8, 2018: <https://www.1843magazine.com/content/edward-carr/last-days-polymath>.

Djerassi set a line between dilettantism and polymathism: "It means that your polymath activities have passed a certain quality control that is exerted within each field by the competition. If they accept you at their level, then I think you have reached that state rather than just dabbling."⁹ My self-imposed metric for such acceptance has always been publishing my work in peer-reviewed journals.

Being a deep generalist or polymath has other consequences, especially in academia. Dr. Babu George, coordinator of international programs in business and an associate professor of management at Fort Hays State University, noted that, "Aspiring to become a well-rounded person with multiple interests will bring a myriad of troubles for someone in academia. Even merely flirting with different disciplines has become an anathema in the contemporary academia."¹⁰ Such exclusion can be a detriment to quality research and the workplace happiness of researchers. George wrote, "Consider the benefits of being able to do your own research and make discoveries in a wide range of areas. Seeing firsthand the sublime interconnectedness among apparently unrelated knowledge realms is an artistic experience par excellence. Some of us are restlessly driven for constant doses of this experience throughout our lives."¹¹

Leveraging Interconnectedness

The "interconnectedness" previously mentioned between "unrelated knowledge" is finally being explored in academia in the form of transdisciplinary research. Such research produces the knowledge George saw as important to complex problems: "It is expected that such expertise will

⁹ Carr, "The Last Days of the Polymath"

¹⁰ Babu George, "A Call for the Return of the Polymath Professor", March 22, 2018, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-careers/a-call-for-the-return-of-the-polymath-professor/>

¹¹ George, "A Call for the Return of the Polymath Professor"

help the polymath solve complex problems needing the application of transdisciplinary knowledge.”¹² Doucet and Janssens, in discussing transdisciplinary research, stated, “Following a long period of ever-increasing specialization, a need for more relational knowledge has become apparent”.¹³ They go on to note, “there is growing evidence and awareness that the earlier established, discipline bound epistemology alone cannot effectively deal with the world’s complexity.”¹⁴

According to Doucet and Janssens, transdisciplinary research is a set of practices that “are issue- or problem-centered approaches to research that prioritize the problem at the center of research over discipline-specific concerns, theories or methods.”¹⁵ More simply, Choi and Pak call it “holistic”¹⁶ while others, like Ramchandani, use words like “transcend, whole”¹⁷ to describe it.

Leavy noted, “transdisciplinary research practices transcend disciplinary borders and open up entirely new research pathways.”¹⁸ Transdisciplinary research “requires innovation, creativity, and flexibility and often employs participatory research design strategies.”¹⁹ Choi and Pak give an example: “Transdisciplinarity integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries.”²⁰

¹² George, “A Call for the Return of the Polymath Professor”.

¹³ Isabelle Doucet and Nel Janssens, “Editorial: Transdisciplinarity, the Hybridization of Knowledge Production and Space Related Research” in *Transdisciplinary Knowledge Production in Architecture and Urbanism: Towards Hybrid Modes of Inquiry*, eds., Isabelle Doucet and Nel Janssens (Berlin: Springer, 2011), 1-14: 1.

¹⁴ Doucet and Janssen, “Editorial,” 1.

¹⁵ Patricia Leavy, *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-centered Methodologies* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2011), 14.

¹⁶ BC Choi and AW Pak, “Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Health Research, Services, Education and Policy: 1. Definitions, Objectives, and Evidence of Effectiveness,” *Clinical and Investigative Medicine* no. 6 (December 2006): 351-64.

¹⁷ Jaya Ramchandani, “What is ‘transdisciplinary?’”, January 23, 2017, access April 26, 2019, <https://medium.com/we-learn-we-grow/what-is-transdisciplinary-13c16eacf57d>

¹⁸ Patricia Leavy, *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-centered Methodologies* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2011), 14.

¹⁹ Leavy, *Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research*, 9.

²⁰ Choi and Pak, “Multidisciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity”.

Creative Writing provides its own version of transdisciplinary research: the Bricoleur-Bowerbird approach described by Webb and Brien that aligns perfectly with my practice as a writer.

Bricoleur-Bowerbird

An article, novel, or poem may involve research in several areas and be supported by field interviews and the author's own experiences. Research adds depth, detail, and richness to works and thereby produces new knowledge. Further, research can be so much more expansive and inclusive if it uses some imagination and creativity, as long as these efforts are relentlessly focused on facts. Without creativity and innovation, new insights are less likely to be discovered. This creativity breeds freedom, which Webb and Brien acknowledge in quoting Bate: "creative artists are not afraid of what Bate called 'an imaginative openness of mind and heightened receptivity to reality in its full and diverse concreteness'".²¹

Webb and Brien developed what they call the Bricoleur-Bowerbird approach to describe research in Creative Writing. The approach equates the writer to the bowerbird, an avian with a proclivity to pilfer all things blue for its nest, casting aside anything that is not blue. At a deeper level, Webb and Brien defined a bowerbird as a:

"[R]esearcher capable of drawing data and ideas together from across fields and disciplines to find harmonies and synergies, and to combine them in a manner that produces not only

²¹ Jen Webb and Donna Lee Brien, "Addressing the 'Ancient Quarrel': Creative Writing as Research" in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* eds. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2010) 186-203: 193.

a satisfying and resolved creative artefact, but a fresh way of understanding those points of connection and their wider implications and applications.”²²

Coupled to this they make use of the Claude Lévi-Strauss concept of the Bricoleur or “handy man” who is “able to make do with what is available”.²³ They expand on his idea, noting, “The principal skill at work here is the creativity that is necessary in order to be able to make what [is] available functional for the necessary purpose”²⁴ and to, “provide space for the multiple methodologies”.²⁵ More simply, the Bricoleur-Bowerbird approach codifies the idea that, “Writers take what they need, from wherever they can find it.”²⁶

The Bricoleur-Bowerbird approach recognizes the production of knowledge through research by a nonspecialist and is an almost perfect philosophical description of my research, but with one important addition. I utilize the inherent freedom of the approach to produce an unusual artefact for a Creative Writer: an academic article. This extends the application of Webb and Brien’s work beyond creative outputs like poems and novels, and also establishes Bricoleur-Bowerbird as a method for contributing to fields outside of Creative Writing, something they questioned when they wrote:

“Our point, then, is that practice-led research in creative writing affords researchers the opportunity to build knowledge in their field. While they may cross disciplinary borders

²² Webb and Brien, ‘Ancient Quarrel’, 199.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

in the process of gathering information for their work, their knowledge generation is typically confined to the domain of creative practice."²⁷

Working across academic research fields also presents great risk. If my research fails or falls short of being enough for a useful narrative, all efforts are lost. This potential failure is a possible outcome for many research efforts and is a critical attribute of academic research:

"This embrace of the possibility of failure is, however, one of the hallmarks of bluesky experimental research in any academic field, and a forerunner of real innovation and, therefore, should be valorized rather than guarded against."²⁸

Creative Writing theory can now play a role in facilitating research outside its own discipline, and in particular, my research and production.

The Writer as Academic Researcher

Harper, Gutkind, Webb, Brien and others have examined the relationship between research and Creative Writing. Harper addressed this relationship when he wrote:

"Certainly the idea that works of creative writing contain human knowledge existed. That idea existed as a very well-supported ancient notion: that works of Creative Writing contain important human knowledge, and that this knowledge can incorporate the individual as

²⁷ Webb and Brien, 'Ancient Quarrel', 202.

²⁸ Webb and Brien, 'Ancient Quarrel', 195.

well as the cultural, the purposeful as well as the accidental, the emotional and personally dispositional as well as the more clearly factual or theoretical that is derived from methodical practices.”²⁹

Take, for example, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes novels and short stories. Doyle’s use of research allowed for the use of innovative methods and the leveraging of new technology like the telephone and forensic methods such as fingerprint examination. While works of fiction, the factual elements in the story advanced knowledge and police practice.

While research is used in all branches of Creative Writing, the work in creative nonfiction is of most use to this Context Statement. Gutkind wrote that:

“Creative nonfiction demands spontaneity and an imaginative approach, while remaining true to the validity and integrity of the information it contains. That is why the creative nonfiction form is so appealing to people with new ideas or fresh interpretations of accepted concepts in history, science, or the arts; people with an intellectual curiosity about the world around us or a fresh viewpoint or approach to staid and seemingly inaccessible disciplines.”³⁰

Lopate added to this and simplified it when he wrote, “The materials I am working with in nonfiction are facts and truths.”³¹ Gutkind strengthened this observation:

²⁹ Graeme Harper, *Making Up* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ix.

³⁰ Lee Gutkind, *The Art of Creative Nonfiction* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 5-6.

³¹ Phillip Lopate, *To Show and To Tell* (New York: Free Press, 2013), 79.

“Creative nonfiction differs from fiction because it is necessarily and scrupulously accurate and the presentation of information, a teaching element to readers, is paramount. Creative nonfiction differs from traditional reportage, however, because balance is unnecessary and subjectivity is not only permitted but encouraged.”³²

Those like Harper and Gutkind have established the researcher element of the creative writer’s identity. Further, the deep generalist-polymath concepts previously discussed establish the viability of the nonspecialist researcher. Despite these ties, further anchors are needed to cement this approach as a potential source of academic research. I contend that Creative Writing provides two such anchors: a research approach (Bricoleur-Bowerbird) and a unifying skill (writing). A third anchor, academic peer-review publication in non-Creative Writing journals, was added to test the acceptance of the research product in the specialist fields.

This research model is important in “demonstrating that, as a discipline, creative writing is capable of combining conventional academic rigour with creative thought, or producing research with utility as well as art (and artefacts) of aesthetic value.”³³ It realizes the same ends that Doucet and Janssens called for in advancing the need for transdisciplinary research approaches: a “new form of knowledge production that focuses on the combination of different types of knowledge.”³⁴ Further, it aligns with Kassabova’s observation of “a twenty-first century trend for

³² Gutkind, *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*, 15.

³³ Webb and Brien, “Addressing the ‘Ancient Quarrel’”, 192.

³⁴ Doucet and Janssen, “Editorial,” 1.

re-evaluating creative non-fiction through experimentations with form and developing theories of craft".³⁵

Context Statement

This Context Statement, along with the ten public works submitted with it, covers a 14-year period and explores the genesis and subsequent growth of a unique, non-specialist approach to producing academic articles. The approach exhibits how the tools of Creative Writing can be successfully used to produce articles not only in ten different academic fields, but with each one drawing research from a number of distinct academic disciplines. This makes my writing practice more closely aligned with that of a poet, novelist or writer of creative non-fiction, than that of a traditional single-subject academic.

Following the tradition of the deep generalist-polymath and the philosophy of transdisciplinary research to help me investigate aspects of the world around me, I illustrate a potential path wherein a Creative Writer's approach to research can produce articles that challenge boundaries and advance our understanding of an ever-complicating world. My goal is not to say that specialization is not needed. Rather, I seek to provide an alternate path to producing publishable research at a time when such innovative approaches are seen as the solution to the increasingly complex problems of the world.

³⁵ Kapka Kassabova et al, *Writing Creative Non-Fiction: Determining the Form* (Cantebury, United Kingdom: Gylphi, 2015), 4.

CHAPTER 2: BRICOLEUR: MAKING SPACE FOR MULTIPLE METHODOLOGIES

A SUGGESTION ON HOW TO READ THIS CHAPTER

This chapter walks through my Public Works (in the order in which they were published) and explores the unique efforts that went into both the discovery and the research of the subject. As these were projects of personal interest, sometimes projects overlapped or one was paused while another progressed. Such starts and stops are not core to the central themes of this Context Statement. While the intent of this chapter is to show the Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach in action, it also denotes other elements of Creative Writing evidenced by the Public Works. The methods and tactics of writing the articles and publishing them will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Leveraging multiple fields seemed so natural to me I almost failed to notice the practice or understand its impact. Using multiple fields just had to be done. Doing otherwise would have led, at least from my perspective, to a shallow narrative that should have been so much more. I cut across fields, specializing in none of those that I used. From each I pilfered what I needed to piece my narrative together. I took what I needed from where I could find it and moved on with my work. This activity, as described in Webb and Brien's Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach, is the core of research in Creative Writing. My work shows that while creative writers have always been researchers, they have not yet been seen as transdisciplinary peer-reviewed researchers until now.

THE BEGINNING

The first public work addressed in this Context Statement was not my first publication. While I was a junior in high school (age 16), I published a book review in my city's newspaper (December 24, 1995). My next publication would not come until five years later, while I was a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The next publications explored a 1903 trip to Lincoln, Nebraska by Theodore Roosevelt (May 2000), a museum newsletter article on a cuneiform tablet collection (discussed in detail later in this Statement), Theodore Roosevelt hunting crocodiles and alligators (November 2001), the ballistics of U.S. Civil War bullets (April 2002), and the fossil crocodiles and alligators of Nebraska (October 2002). Most of these articles lacked the internal field diversity of my subsequent work and it was not until I worked on my article, "Dusting the Past: Archaeology and Ancient Fingerprints", that I was using multiple fields to flesh out the narrative of my research subjects.

1. “Dusting the Past: Archaeology and Ancient Fingerprints”.

Journal of Forensic Identification

November/December 2002, Vol. 52, No. 6, pages 696-703.

Introduction

I have included this article for the main reason that it was my first multi-field effort. This was the article where I discovered that leveraging multiple fields created a more complete academic narrative. Further, this article presents a good example of using plot in an academic article. Ansen Dibell notes that, “Plot is built of significant events in a given story – significant because they have important consequences.”³⁶ To me, each field felt like a plot event as discovering insights from specialties, such as forensic science or linguistics, moved the story along.

Ancient Fingerprints

In the fall of 1999, as a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I followed a lead (an old museum newsletter article) on the existence of a collection of cuneiform tablets housed in the University Museum. Cuneiform tablets are made of river clay and were used to record, in the triangles and lines of the cuneiform script, everything from business receipts to literature in the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia. While wet when written upon, the tablets soon dry out, becoming hard and often fragile.

People talk often about movies or events that were transformative for them at an early age. For me, that movie was *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It resonated with me. I could go into my

³⁶ Ansen Dibell, *Plot* (London: Robinson Publishing, 1990): 5-6.

backyard at home and dig and find artifacts (which I did and found parts of an old bracelet once and another time found an old penny). Throwing on a hat and diving into a cave seemed perfectly reasonable, especially for the 'fortune and glory' that awaited the intrepid adventurer who solved a riddle of the past and saved an artefact. I wanted to be Indiana Jones, dusting off sand from a temple floor and understanding the meaning of the hieroglyphic text. In college, I got my introduction to ancient languages via Middle Egyptian hieroglyphics but shifted to studying the older and more bizarre looking cuneiform script of ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). I had been fascinated by history since I learned to read, so seeking solutions to the puzzles of the past was a natural outlet of this curiosity as I moved from wanting to learn to wanting to discover for myself. Thus, the cuneiform tablets were an interesting opportunity for me.

The museum director granted me access to the collection and while photographing the tablets I found one that had what appeared to me to be a partial fingerprint preserved in the clay. Observing the other edges, I found additional traces of dermal ridges. I was more aware of the nature of fingerprints than most college students as my father spent 30 years in law enforcement. For as long as I could remember, I was around police officers, fingerprints, and evidence. In elementary school, I clamored for materials and articles my dad would get at training sessions or conferences, especially about fingerprints. I could explain patterns like whorls and tented arches before I left elementary school. By high school, I had read my first forensic science textbook.³⁷

Locating a book written by Dr. Nels Forde, a University of Nebraska professor who had studied the tablets in the late 1960s, provided a rough translation. This text showed that the tablet,

³⁷ Richard Saferstein, *Criminalistics: An Introduction to Forensic Science* Fifth edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1994).

a routine receipt for a trade transaction, held two important clues: a date and a name of the scribe. The dating scheme traced to 2042 B.C. and the scribe was named Ur-e-e. As a scribe and businessman, Ur-e-e recorded transactions on wet clay tablets. In recording this transaction, he left his fingerprints as he inscribed both the obverse and reverse surfaces. The pattern of the prints showed how he held the tablet while writing the cuneiform script with a stylus made of a river reed.

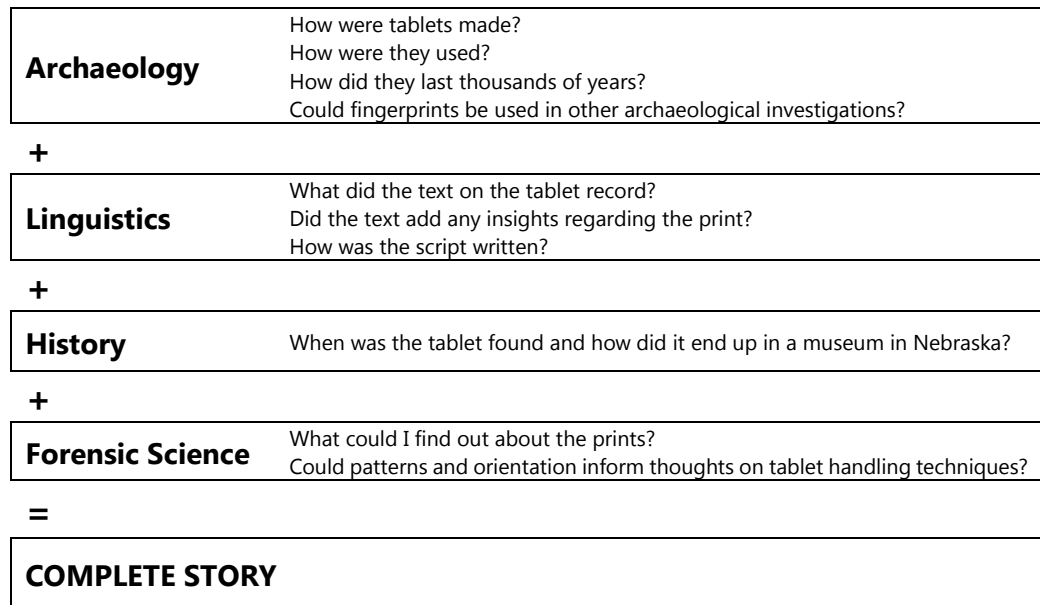
For me, objects are intensely personal. I have a curated collection of significant items from my past displayed in my home. These items evidence where I have been, what I have done, and who I am. It is the same when I find an object. Who had it last? What did they do? For me, finding the fingerprint was even more impactful because in my hand was a cuneiform tablet that on its surface preserved the unique mark of a person. Never before and never since has anyone had that fingerprint. I found a unique, physical identifier of a man who lived 4,000 years ago. I also knew few people would care unless the discovery had some impact on an academic field. Without such a contribution, I would be left to more romanticized notions of the discovery, which I recounted in a museum newsletter article when I wrote:

“Seeing the fingerprints and knowing who they belonged to is like reaching through the dusty voids of past millennia and making contact with a person very different from yourself, but one you feel like you know. Finds like this make scholarship both academically and emotionally rewarding.”³⁸

³⁸ Don Arp, Jr., “Signs of the Times: The University of Nebraska Cuneiform Tablets”. *Museum Notes* No. 108 (February 2001): 4.

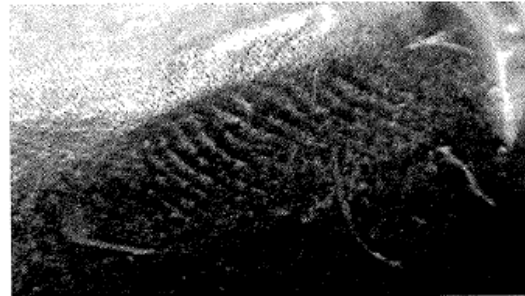
Bricolage

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, researching the tablets and producing the article was my first effort in seeing the value multiple fields of knowledge could play in forming a complete story. As I spoke with various experts including fingerprint examiners, archaeologists, historians, and linguists, each advocated for single-focus examination in their respective field. This did not seem right to me as I saw many more facets to the fingerprint and the tablets. In my mind, it was much like a mathematics equation.



I picked what I needed from wherever I could find it to fill in gaps of the story. For example, archaeology told me that the tablets were made of river clay that was formed into tablets of various sizes depending on need. The scribe held the smaller tablets in his hand and inscribed cuneiform script into the clay with a stylus made from reeds. Once completed, the tablets were stored. They either dried out naturally or became hardened if caught in an accidental structure fire. Forensic science showed, by the orientation of the fingerprints, how the scribe held the tablet

when writing script. That script, I learned with the help of linguistics, recorded a financial transaction. Each field added a perspective or attributed an element to the understanding of the tablet and the fingerprint.



*The fingerprint as discovered (inside circle in photo at left).
The fingerprint under low level microscope magnification
(above).*

The story I found was amazing to me. In 2042 B.C., a man named Ur-e-e picked up a clay tablet, as he had done probably thousands of times by now, and left behind a transaction recorded in cuneiform script and his fingerprints.³⁹ This tablet survived the collapse of Ur-e-e's civilization and centuries' worth of storms and wars. It was found in the early 20th century by a man named Edgar James Banks, brought back to the United States and sold through the mail to a family in Lincoln, Nebraska, who donated it to the University where it joined other Banks collected tablets bought in prior years by the University museum. Three people would study the tablets, Alan Pickering, a University pastor in the early 1960s, Dr. Forde in the late 1960s/early 1970s, and me in the early 2000s.⁴⁰ Pickering preserved the collection, Forde translated it, and I expanded its

³⁹ Nels Forde, *Nebraska Cuneiform Texts of the Sumerian Ur III Dynasty* (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1967): 15.

⁴⁰ Alan Pickering, "Hentracks from Antiquity". *Museum Notes* No. 23 (1964). Forde 1967; Arp 2001; and Don Arp, Jr., "Dusting the Past: Archaeology and Ancient Fingerprints", *Journal of Forensic Identification*, Vol. 52, No. 6 (November/December 2002).

meaning in using that one tablet as evidence for a potential tablet handling technique. I also extrapolated from this and with additional research re-established the use of fingerprints in archaeology, a field first pioneered when archaeologists working on ancient Greek pottery had explored using fingerprints to link pots to potters with limited success.⁴¹



The tablet handling technique for the reverse side of the tablet (above left) as suggested by the dermal ridge patterns found (above right) on all surfaces of the tablet.

Conclusion

"Dusting the Past" was significant as it was the first article in which I used the multi-field research approach. Using the Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach found several fields that provided insights on the tablet and the fingerprints. In discovering and using these fields, a plot for the story became apparent, making the article a strong example of the use of plot in an academic article.

⁴¹ Paul Åström and Sven Eriksson, *Fingerprints and Archaeology* (Göteborg: P. Åström, 1980).

2. "Jukker: A brief note on an instrument noun in Guyanese Creole used to denote a specific improvised weapon".

Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages

Vol. 25:2 (2010) pgs. 345-349.

Introduction

"Jukker" leverages multi-field research, but was also my first article built on personal field experience, in this case hearing Guyanese Creole in Guyana. The article is interesting for the number of languages it covers in exploring word origins, but also in specialist vocabulary and rendering of the field of linguistics. In writing the work, I translated from African languages into English and then expressed the concepts in the nomenclature of linguistics. Due to the complexity and exactness of the languages and elements, I see "Jukker" as a good example of style in my writing. While style may have many meanings in Creative Writing, Morley wrote that, "Precision of language is important in developing good personal style. Your style will be judged not only by the way you order and play with words, but also your choice of words."⁴² With "Jukker" there were several layers of precision needed to adequately understand the word and relate its origins and meaning in the article.

Jukker

While this article was my first published work involving a subject from the South American nation of Guyana, it was not my first research subject from that country. In 2007, I was working

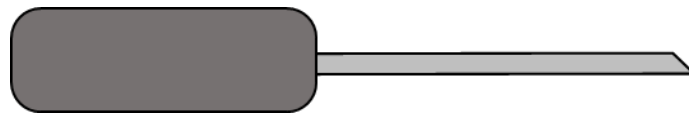
⁴² David Morley. *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 103.

for the Nebraska Legislature and spent a week hosting a delegation from the National Assembly of Guyana. Through events that will be described later in this chapter, I became deeply interested in Guyanese culture, especially a style of machete used to harvest sugarcane that was locally known as a cutlass. The more I read and experienced in two trips to the nation, the more my interest in Guyanese culture deepened. When I returned to graduate school to finish my Master's degree in anthropology, my thesis was Guyana-focused and examined a type of war club found only amongst the tribes of Guyana. Part of staying in touch with Guyanese culture was reading the two major newspapers online: the *Stabroek News* and the *Kaieteur News*. One element that fascinated me and united my cutlass research, thesis work, and trips was the everyday language of Guyana, a melting pot language known as a creole that incorporated words from the languages of the people that lived in the country, which included English, Dutch, Indian, Amerindian, Chinese, and various African languages.

In my visits to the country (2008 and 2009), I experienced creole in most conversations. Laborers, often poorly educated, spoke a creole that, while based on English and using many English words, was almost impossible to understand without the help of a native Guyanese as such utterances sounded to me to be half words or mumbled. By the end of the first trip in 2008, I had developed an ear for creole so that by the time I returned the following year, I was up to speed within two days and could pick my way through a street-level creole conversation without looking too clueless.

In navigating the canecutter villages to buy cutlasses for my research on the implement, I often needed my friend Tony's son, Anthony, with me to interpret. The newspapers of Guyana, while written in English, will use slang words from Guyanese Creole to aid readers in

understanding the content. And it was on the pages of a newspaper where I first saw the word 'jukker', a certain type of improvised weapon compared to an "improvised ice-pick" or a "crude hand-made pointed weapon" used to 'juk' or stab someone.⁴³ What was particularly interesting is that one could be jukked with anything sharp, but the term 'jukker' only referred to this improvised weapon. Why the specificity in one regard and the lack of detail in another?



The basic design of a jukker consists of a handle of some form (wood, tape, fabric wrap, etc.) and a narrow shaft with no sharp edges terminating in a sharpened point for stabbing.

Bricolage *Hoplology* + *Linguistics*

*Hoplology*⁴⁴

While encountered in other situations, improvised weapons are usually found in areas of the world where weapons production and ownership are controlled by a governmental authority. These can be areas experiencing local uprisings and violence or in institutions such as prisons and mental health facilities. The weapons are improvised from available materials because manufactured weapons are not available. While the jukker on the streets of Guyana could be a repurposed, commercially available ice-pick, it is more often found in an improvised construction

⁴³ *Stabroek News*, November 7, 2008 and December 30, 2008.

⁴⁴ The study of person-to-person combat and fighting behavior and includes everything from martial arts to weapons design.

using nails, metal scraps, and even heavy gauge wire, similar to weapons found in prisons. In American prisons this weapon is considered a type of stabbing weapon called a 'shiv'.⁴⁵ The simple design was also exploited by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II and by novelty weapons manufacturers in the United States that produce pens with hidden spikes in them.⁴⁶

Guyana is a poor country, with a large population of urban and rural poor who are often arrested and learn jukker manufacture in jail or prison. They use the knowledge once released to create weapons on the streets of Guyana. As ownership of firearms is heavily regulated in Guyana, access to weapons is difficult. While the cutlass, a 3-foot long machete that will be examined in a subsequent chapter of this text, is readily accessible, there are restrictions on carrying the implement in public. Canecutters are usually required to carry their cutlasses wrapped in fabric bags to limit access to them as a weapon.⁴⁷ An improvised jukker is easy to make, requires little investment so it can be discarded quickly if approached by the police, and is easily concealed.

A jukker could be used in any situation in which the user believes violence is required. In one example from the *Stabroek News*, when a man was questioned because of his possession of a jukker he said: "Officer I gon tell yah de truth, I have a ice-pick on me because a man tek me child mother and I gotta juk he up."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ J. Luger, *Improvised Weapons in American Prisons* (Port Townsend, Washington: Loompanics Limited, 1985), 48-50.

⁴⁶ H. Keith Melton, *OSS Special Weapons and Equipment* (New York: Sterling Publishing CO., Inc., 1991), 18.

E. Nowicki, E. and D. Ramsey, *Street Weapons* (Powers Lake, Wisconsin: Performance Dimensions Publishing, 1991), 29.

⁴⁷ I personally observed this practice during trips to Guyana in 2008 and 2009.

⁴⁸ *Stabroek News*, November 7, 2008.

Linguistics

With the British victory and subsequent colonization of Guyana, Guyanese Creole is heavily influenced by English vocabulary, construction, and syntax. However, as with other creoles, Guyanese Creole did not develop in a vacuum and accumulated influences from the various cultural and language groups that came to reside in the country. Thus, Guyanese Creole is a mixture of English, Dutch, various Amerindian languages, various Indian languages, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese, to name a few. That said, the African languages and dialects spoken by imported slaves had the most significant impact on Guyanese Creole, with experts such as Bickerton noting, based on his work in the country that, "wherever Guyanese differed from English, the cause lay in the substrate — the African languages that they early arrivals spoke."⁴⁹ Following this line of inquiry found the origins of *juk* and *jukker*. Tracing the verb, I found origins in Mende and Fulani languages in West Africa, along with influences from Jamaica and Cameroons Pidgin.⁵⁰ Interestingly, in each language the verb always referred to poking, piercing, or stabbing.

Depending on the time of publication and area, the spelling of *juk* provided some challenges, with variations including *jook*, *juk*, *juck*, and *juick* being used across the Caribbean.⁵¹ This was due to the word being used primarily in verbal communication and not in written items like letters or newspapers.

⁴⁹ Derek Bickerton, *Bastard Tongues: A Trailblazing Linguist Finds Clues to Our Common Humanity*, (New York: MacMillan, 2009). 63.

⁵⁰ Richard Allsopp, "Washing Up Our Wares: Towards a Dictionary of Our Use of English," in *A Festival of Guyanese Words*, ed. John R. Rickford (Georgetown: University of Guyana, 1978), 173-194: 184. Richard Allsopp. *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Albert Croll Baugh, and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language* (London: Routledge, 1993), 316 and 323.

F. G. Cassidy and R.B. Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 253.

⁵¹ Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, 316. Cassidy, *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, 253.

As noted previously, the interesting aspect of the word *jukker* is that it is a noun that refers to a specific object whereas the verb it is based on, *juk*, is not object specific and routine usage sees people *juked* with nails, needles, and knives.

Given its meaning and usage, it was necessary to determine how, linguistically, *jukker* could be classified and explained. Early options included being an agent noun.⁵² Further analysis showed the specific identity of the weapon met the instrument noun definition as it “pairs consisting of a meaning and a process such as ... the formation of ‘instrument’ nouns by the suffixation of *-er*”.⁵³ Thus, using *juk* and the English suffix *-er* creates *jukker* which refers to a specific weapon and provides morphotactic transparency. While some sources, like Dressler, noted that using *-er* did not obfuscate meaning, there is nothing in the word *jukker* itself that makes meaning clear. Based on this, I suggested the existence of “a new class of instrument noun that could be termed cryptosemantic, i.e. nouns whose specific meaning is hidden in the generalized construction and nature of the elements forming the word and is only made apparent in usage.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

While an excellent example of multi-field research, “*Jukker*” presented an opportunity to handle very complex elements of language and linguistics in order to recount the origins and usage of the term. In writing the article, I needed to translate from an African language to English and then render elements correctly in the type used by linguistics in addition to properly navigating the language in linguistics to explain my findings.

⁵² Wallace Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970), 109.

⁵³ G.E. Booij, Christian Lehmann, and Joachim Mugdan, *Morphology* (Berlin: deGruyter, 2000), 265.

⁵⁴ Don Arp, Jr., “*Jukker*: A brief note on an instrument noun in Guyanese Creole used to denote a specific improvised weapon” *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, vol. 25:2 (2010), 345-349: 347-348.

3. "'An Eye for an Eye': Examining a Cuneiform Inscription on the Nebraska State Capitol".

Sculpture Journal

Vol. 22.1 (2013), pgs. 139-143.

Introduction

This article mirrors the efforts of "Dusting the Past" closely, but explores cuneiform as an element of a large modern sculpture. As with all the articles, multi-field research was used. This article differs from "Dusting the Past" in that the content of text is much more relevant to the overall meaning of the sculptural artefact. Given this relevance, this article is also a good example of motif in an academic article. Freedman defined motif as "a theme, character, or verbal pattern which recurs in literature or folklore."⁵⁵ For this article, the history and development of the law and associated issues of personal freedom cut across all elements from the translation and contextualization of the text to analyzing the sculpture's purpose as part of the Capitol's design.

Cuneiform and the Capitol

The building has a square base and a 400-foot tower, all made of limestone. Built during a 10-year period ending in 1932, the interior and exterior of the building serve as a tapestry of legal history and Nebraska history, recorded in relief sculpture, statuary, mosaics, engravings, and paintings. A University of Nebraska philosophy professor worked with the architect to design the historical and philosophical elements of the building.

⁵⁵ William Freedman, "The Literary Motif" in *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*, eds., Michael J. Hoffman and Patrick D. Murphy (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 200-212: 202.

The Nebraska State Capitol



While much of the building is covered in words or sayings in Greek, Latin, or English, some areas have scripts from earlier eras of legal history. One of these less common scripts was cuneiform. Cuneiform consists of triangles and lines and served as the script for the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia. As noted earlier in this chapter, I had some experience working with cuneiform and cuneiform tablets through research I had done years before (1999-2002) at the University of Nebraska State Museum.⁵⁶ This past experience led me to take notice of a small (compared to the overall size of the Capitol exterior) sculptural element consisting of a relief sculpture of the Babylonian king Hammurabi surrounded by a cuneiform inscription. From the moment I saw it, I had to figure out why it was there and what it meant in the overall design scheme of the building.

⁵⁶ Arp 2002.

Hammurabi sculpture and inscription.



Bricolage *History + Linguistics + Engraving + Babylonian Culture*

History

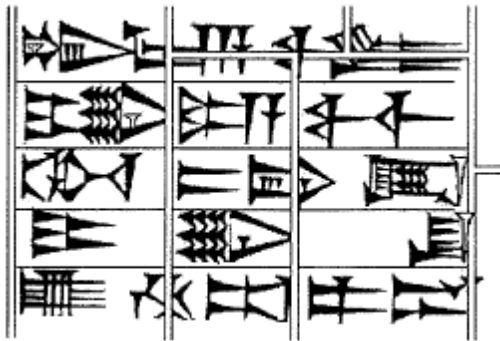
I began my research by scrolling through the online article index of the journal *Nebraska History*, looking for any articles on the Capitol and its design. I located O.H. Zabel's article that is a complete study and cataloging of the exterior designs of the building, along with a history of the collaboration between the philosophy professor and the architect.⁵⁷ The article contained an image of the Hammurabi piece and identified the text as Law 196 from Hammurabi's Code,

⁵⁷ O.H. Zabel, "History in Stone: The Story in Sculpture on the Exterior of the Nebraska Capitol," *Nebraska History* 62 (1981).

providing the following translation: "If a free man destroyed the eye of an aristocrat (or younger free man), they [i.e. the legal authorities] shall destroy his eye."⁵⁸

Linguistics and Engraving

I pursued verifying the translation on three fronts. First, in examining the script on the Capitol, I found errors in the signs, so I wanted to make sure these errors were not substantive enough to change the meaning. Second, I consulted four translations of the Code, spanning about 100 years, to see trends and how interpretations changed.⁵⁹ Cuneiform translation is ever-evolving, so a difference of a few years can change our understanding of a text. Third, assuming the signs were accurate enough, I would re-translate the text and test it against the other I had found.



The cuneiform inscription, showing the block joints cutting through the signs as well as the missing sign elements (shown in outline).

The surface on which the script was engraved covers several blocks. In covering the blocks, cuneiform signs extend across seams, which caused about nine signs to be obscured and have

⁵⁸ Zabel, "History in Stone", as note 2, 348.

⁵⁹ R.F. Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi King of Babylon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904).
C.H.W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904).
L.W. King, *The Code of Hammurabi*; <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp>; accessed January 2013.
M.E.J. Richardson, *Hammurabi's Laws: Text, Translation and Glossary* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

elements missing due to the seam. Three other signs are missing portions due to outright omission, and another sign is hard to read because it is not as deeply carved as the others for some undetermined reason. That said, in referencing the source text from a rendering of the Code of Hammurabi, the signs are fundamentally accurate, with the errors and omissions not being substantive enough to change the meaning of the sign or its role in the text.⁶⁰

Babylonian Culture and a Return to Linguistics

Consulting other translations I found that each followed a similar formula of 'an eye for an eye', but differed slightly in the names for the parties. Some used 'man' others used 'patrician'.⁶¹ Each was trying to grapple with the complex social stratification of Babylonia, where all people were not equal, with various classes for slaves, free men, and those enslaved to pay off debt.⁶² Digging into the social stratifications and the context of the law code itself favored less complex translations because the code only applied to upper tiers of society. For example, if a slave took a free man's eye, his penalty would certainly have been death, as slaves were not protected by the Code. Thus, the Code documented the law for high-class equals. This is evidenced by the law itself wherein it institutes only monetary penalties if a free man injures a slave.⁶³

Given the fame of the passage, tracing the signs and their meanings was straightforward and involved consulting a few resources. Based on the cultural insights noted above, I determined that the translation that was most accurate given the context of the law came from a 2004 source,

⁶⁰ Rendering of signs from Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi*, 1904.

⁶¹ See Note 91.

⁶² K. R. Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 116.

⁶³ Richardson, *Hammurabi's Laws*, as note 12, p. 105.

which stated: "If a man has destroyed the sight of another similar person, they shall destroy his sight."⁶⁴

Conclusion

This article provides a good example of how, as our understanding of an extinct language evolves, our understanding of the source culture changes and deepens. Since Zabel wrote his article in 1981, advances in cuneiform translation have provided nuance and detail to our understanding of Babylonian culture. This understanding also impacts our examination of the design of the Capitol and the history of law that it represents. This powerful motif runs throughout this story and highlights the continuing progress of humankind's pursuit of justice.

⁶⁴ Richardson, *Hammurabi's Laws*, as note 12, p. 105.

4. **“Stout and Sharp’: Theodore Roosevelt’s Tiffany-made hunting-knife”.**

Heritage of the Great Plains

Vol. 46, No. 2 (Winter 2014), pgs. 22-35.

Introduction

I chose to include this article as it leverages several subfields like botany, zoology, and literature to support an examination using the broader fields of design and material culture. Further, as the knife at times is a functional tool and at others a costume prop, this article is a good example of the concept of character as it can be used in an academic article. According to Brown, “literary character denotes both a body and a spectrum of distinctive traits that set one character apart from another.”⁶⁵ The knife, as part of Roosevelt’s cowboy attire, played a critical role in setting him apart from those around him and helped to establish an identity that he used throughout the rest of his life.

Roosevelt’s Knife

Since reading a book about the presidents of the United States in the fifth grade, I have been a huge fan of President Theodore Roosevelt.⁶⁶ What is not to like about a man who was an author, historian, soldier, cowboy, big game hunter, and president? Once, he gave a one-hour speech as he bled from a bullet wound in his chest. His life was something that even Hollywood could not dream up. In middle school, I collected books about Roosevelt and in the eighth grade

⁶⁵ William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 6.

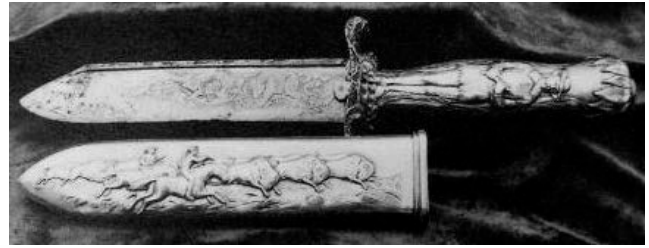
⁶⁶ Born October 27, 1858 – Died January 6, 1919. U.S. President September 14, 1901 – March 4, 1909.

joined the Theodore Roosevelt Association (TRA), a group chartered by the United States Congress to preserve the memory of Roosevelt. My interest has maintained through the years. My first peer-reviewed publication was on Roosevelt⁶⁷ and I am currently serving my fourth consecutive two-year term as a member of the TRA Advisory Board.

Roosevelt was sickly as a child. Through exercise, he built himself up to be a strong adult. Roosevelt was always a juxtaposition between the bookish, eastern United States wealthy elite and the rugged, hard-charging cowboy, soldier, and hunter. Regardless of role, he was plagued by terrible eyesight and after 1905 was blind in one eye. Given this background, it was no more out of place to see him in a safari helmet leaning on an elephant than to see him in formal dress negotiating a peace treaty. He dressed for the part he played, but did so at a functional level. For example, photographs of him hunting show stained shirts and trousers with holes worn through. Photographs of him from the Spanish-American War show sweat. Out of all this practicality, there is one glaring contradiction: the knife he wore as a cowboy in North Dakota.

In photographs of Roosevelt from this time, he can be seen wearing, wedged in his belt, a silver Bowie knife. Given his aristocratic roots, his knife was silver and had been designed and built by Tiffany and Co. of New York. Against his usual clothing of the time of buckskins, it looks very odd. The enigma of a man of action with a knife made by a jeweler was too perplexing not to pursue.

⁶⁷ Don Arp, Jr., "Here Comes the President! TR and His 1903 Lincoln, Nebraska Visit". *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (May 2000).



Roosevelt's Tiffany-produced hunting knife and sheath (above).

Roosevelt in his buckskins, with the knife tucked in his belt (at left).

Bricolage *Clothing Design* + *Material Culture* + *Design* + *Tool Usage*

Clothing Design

Finding the importance of the hunting knife rested in understanding how Roosevelt saw the west and how he planned to make himself a part of it. It is important to note that Roosevelt decided to live in North Dakota in 1884 after his mother died and his wife died in childbirth, on the same day: February 14. Roosevelt was ready for a new start and a new life.

Much of what the eastern United States knew about life in the American West and on the Great Plains was colored by cheap and exaggerated dime novels of western cowboy adventures. This led Roosevelt to understand western wear as ornate and fringed buckskin shirts and trousers.

While not necessarily incorrect as many cowboys and frontier scouts wore buckskins, they wore simple garments, not multi-tasseled wonders like Roosevelt's. Westerners described him as "a slim, anaemic-looking young fellow dressed in the exaggerated style which was considered indisputable evidence of the rank tenderfoot."⁶⁸ By August 1884, he was clad in "broad sombrero hat, fringed and beaded buckskin shirt, horse hide chaparajos or riding trousers, and cowhide boots, with braided bridle and silver spurs."⁶⁹ While he muted his style a bit during his time in North Dakota, he kept many flashy elements. As is important with many style decisions, he wore the items with confidence and this allowed him to pull off accessories that would have gotten others made fun of or punched. His knife was part of this 'costume.'

Material Culture (Weapons History)

For ranchers, cowboys, frontiersmen, and scouts, knives played an important role in their daily kit. The knife was needed for everyday work from cutting food and digging a hole to stabbing and killing an opponent in a fight. Roosevelt wrote once that "When after game a hunting-knife is stuck in the girdle. This should be stout and sharp, but not too long, with a round handle."⁷⁰ The seven and one-half-inch blade of his knife was modeled after the famed George Butler & Co. "Green River" knife.⁷¹ It had a clipped point with unsharpened false edge and a cross guard with ingenious tabs that locked into the scabbard, thus securing the knife.

⁶⁸ Hermann Hagedorn, *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands* (Medora: Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association, 1949), 102.

⁶⁹ Henry Cabot Lodge, *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884-1918* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 7.

⁷⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1886), 35.

⁷¹ R.L. Wilson, *Theodore Roosevelt: Outdoorsman* (New York: Winchester Press, 1971), 54. Harold L. Peterson, *American Knives* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 69.

Design Elements

The knife was designed and built by Tiffany and Co. and consisted of a round repoussé sterling silver handle. The design elements cover many fields including botany, wildlife, and even early American fiction involving frontiersmen. The handle has a pommel covered in elm leaves, with the obverse decorated with Roosevelt's name and the reverse depicting a classic 'leatherstocking' frontiersmen as recounted in the works of writers like James Fenimore Cooper and his work *The Last of the Mohicans*.⁷² The hilt or cross guard looks like a mixture of leaves and branches. The blade contains a scene of a buck and does on one side, with the other showing two large bears. The scabbard, also silver, depicts two horsemen shooting into a herd of bison.

Tool Usage

The knife blade shows lots of wear, which matches Roosevelt's accounts of doing such activities as digging out a hole to water horses.⁷³ While Roosevelt makes several mentions of using a knife in ranch tasks, his most interesting knife use came during his presidency and evidences his skill and comfort with bladed weapons. During a mountain lion hunt in 1903, instead of shooting a lion held by the hunting dogs, he walked and stabbed the lion with a knife to avoid hurting the dogs.⁷⁴

While Roosevelt was emotionally invested in the exaggerated symbolism of the American West, his interest was born of respect and the zeal to participate in what he saw as a historical

⁷² James Barber, *Theodore Roosevelt: Icon of the American Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 30. Elbert L. Little, *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Tress* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 38-39 and plates 160-168.

⁷³ Theodore Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail* (New York: The Century Co., 1915), 134.

⁷⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *Outdoor Pastimes of An American Hunter* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 40-41.

tradition of bravery and manliness. When he did participate, it was by no half measure. He knew how to use a knife from experience, regardless if it was a fancy knife designed by a jeweler or a simple hunting knife used to stab a mountain lion.

Conclusion

Exploring the story behind Roosevelt's knife allowed me to use some subfields in support of the larger fields, such as design, that were used to create the narrative. Roosevelt's knife is interesting for many reasons, but perhaps one of its most interesting attributes is the role it played in establishing the cowboy character identity of Roosevelt. From Roosevelt's time in the Dakotas, he would use time and time again his identity as a western cowboy.

5. "Forced Perspective: Police Officers' Personal Opinions and Racial Data Collection in Nebraska".

Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles

Vol. 87, No. 3, 2014, pgs. 195-200.

Introduction

This article is a good example of how projects undertaken for one reason can be used as a starting point to engage with the subject but for other purposes. Further, the article provides a clear example of how the research can extrapolate from fieldwork and dig into issues as varied as police practice and information systems design. Also, at the core of this article is the concept of conflict. Coles said that, "Conflict is desire against opposing desire, desire against almost insurmountable obstacles".⁷⁵ Coles elaborated, "The opposition in conflict does not have to be good against evil, either. Often, good going against good, and evil against evil, are better."⁷⁶ The conflict in this article is multi-layered and encompasses conflict between law enforcement and minority communities as well as conflict between law enforcement, policymakers, and academics on how best to address the issue of racial profiling.

Concepts of Race

When I returned to graduate school in 2009 after an absence of seven years, one of the courses I needed to complete for my Master's degree in anthropology was a core course on race and anthropology called Human Variation. Several faculty members in multiple departments were

⁷⁵ William H. Coles, *Literary Story as an Art Form: A Text for Writers* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2008), 100.

⁷⁶ Coles, *Literary Story*, 100.

doing a long-term data collection project called Concepts of Race.⁷⁷ As part of this effort, the faculty members sent their classes out into the field to gather answers to four questions from any definable population, such as school teachers, fraternity members, and wait staff. The four questions that needed to be answered were:

1. Please define 'race'.
2. How many races exist?
3. How much genetic contribution does one have to have to be included within a particular racial group or category?
4. What features, characteristics and behaviors would you include in each racial group or category?

As noted in previous chapters of this Context Statement, my family has a public safety heritage. My grandfather was a county sheriff in Nebraska. Both my father and one of his brothers were deputies or police officers in various departments, with my father retiring from a 35-year-career in 2012 having spent the last 30 years of that career with one agency. I have always known law enforcement. From riding around the small town that I called home until age 3 with my grandfather in his patrol car, to sitting in court with my father instead of with a babysitter, to working with forensic lab personnel on my cuneiform fingerprint discovery, to holding internships with state and federal agencies, law enforcement was always a comfortable arena for me.

⁷⁷ "Concepts of Race" project at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (IRB # 20100210675EX) for the course Human Variation, ANTH 442/842.

Through this I had knowledge of one of the most significant issues facing law enforcement: racial profiling. Racial profiling involves officers taking any actions or making any enforcement decisions based solely on the race of a contacted party and not on any evidence.⁷⁸ At its core, it is racism and a vile practice that has no place in public safety. The issue was sensitive to me due to an event from, of all places, my eighth grade English class. The director of correctional services for the state at the time visited my class and spoke of his experiences being black and growing up in Central America before coming to the United States. At one point he said, in his experience, that all police officers were racist. This shocked me as I knew my father was the farthest thing from racist and even served on our city's Human Rights Commission and other boards. I also knew other officers who were not. I raised the issue and argued with him, eventually receiving an apology letter wherein he took no fault for what he said and pretty much suggested I misunderstood. I did not misunderstand.

The response in Nebraska, and in other states, to find officers using racial profiling was a data collection system that was flawed in its approach.⁷⁹ To fulfill my requirement to collect data on concepts of race I chose to use police officers in an attempt to gain insights into how 21st century officers viewed race and the data system they were required to use. After each traffic stop, officers were required to record the perceived race of the person or persons contacted and what enforcement action was taken (issued a warning, citation, arrested, etc.).⁸⁰

⁷⁸ D. Ramirez, J. McDevitt, and A. Farrell, *A Resource Guide On Racial Profiling Data Collection Systems: Promising Practices And Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 2000), 3.

⁷⁹ R. Engel, J. Calnon,, and T. Bernard, "Theory and Racial Profiling: Shortcomings and Future Directions in Research," *Justice Quarterly* 19 (2002): 249-273. K. Kruger, "Collecting Statistics in Response to Racial Profiling Allegations" *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (May 2002), 8-12.

⁸⁰ Legislative Bill 593, 2001.

Bricolage *Anthropology* + *IT System Design* + *Police Procedure*

Anthropology

Functionally, this assignment was a truncated version of classic anthropological field work. We were required to gain responses from 16 different people, so the sample size was decidedly small. Further, we were required to fill out data sheets recording our results that could be rolled up into the larger faculty project. With help from my father and his co-workers, I interviewed the required 16 officers and then started to look for patterns in my data. What was fascinating is that while some officers identified only one race, the human race, others identified dozens, hundreds, and even thousands. Some noted that there could be a genetic basis for races, but also noted environment growing up and exposure to beliefs and practices played a role as well.⁸¹

IT System Design

While I knew my class research ended here, as that was the limit of the assignment, I also knew I needed to dig deeper because while these officers held a very wide view of race, they were required to use a data collection system that recorded only six races.⁸² Further, asking citizens in traffic stops to self-identify was against statute, so the officers were in a situation wherein they could be forced to use stereotypes to assign a person to a racial category that was narrower than their individual view on race. Assignment patterns in their work could lead to charges of racial profiling. Each year, a report came out that said minorities were stopped by police officer more

⁸¹ Don Arp, Jr., "Forced Perspective: Police Officers' Personal Opinions and Racial Data Collection in Nebraska," *Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles* Vol. 87, No. 3 (2014), 195-200: 197-198.

⁸² White, Black, Hispanic, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian-Pacific Islander, or Other.

frequently than whites, but each year it also failed to show that enforcement actions were the result of racial profiling and did not take into account other factors such as income level.⁸³ For example, in the United States, minorities tend to earn less and suffer from lack of employment opportunities. Having less money means expenditures like vehicle registration are not made in favor of buying food, but officers routinely stop vehicles because of expired license plates. Sadly, given the socio-economic status of many minorities, they are stopped more because they cannot afford to comply with laws that require payment of a fee. The pattern here is not racial profiling, but rather one of disparate access to resources. A data system, no matter how well designed, was not going to find it.

Police Procedure

During their interviews, several officers brought up racial profiling and noted that, especially with tinted windows and in low light conditions or with vehicles traveling at high rates of speed, it was impossible to tell the race or even gender of the person driving and that such knowledge only came when the officer approached the vehicle window. Studies had been done on this fact, showing the flaw in data collection systems: If analysis of the data was to prove bias, it needed to record data at the officer's decision point to stop the car and not once the car was stopped because the decision had already been made. And studies that did look at this found no difference between daylight and nighttime enforcement actions.⁸⁴

⁸³ Nancy Hicks, "Profiling stats no better, no worse," *Lincoln Journal-Star*, April 6, 2010.

⁸⁴ J. Grogger and G. Ridgeway, "Testing for Racial Profiling in Traffic Stops from Behind the Veil of Darkness," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 101 (2006): 878-887.

Conclusion

This article examines multiple aspects of the perceptions of race held by law enforcement officers and the efforts from policymakers and academics to provide a data system capable of identifying concerning patterns of conduct.

6. "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses: A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana".

Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Practice

Vol. 9, No. 12 (December 2014), pgs. 999-1001.

Introduction

This article was included for a few reasons. First, it uses a wide variety of fields ranging from history to trademark law. Second, it is one of the few articles with a good part of the narrative that is moved along by action other than research. Turco defines action as "Movement, doing things, deeds".⁸⁵ While details for the story come from history, the narrative progresses as I discover the trademark violation in Guyana and investigate it, along with the subsequent actions of the British High Commission and my follow up in 2009.

Finding the Cutlass

In 2007, I was working for the Nebraska Legislature and spent a week hosting a delegation from the National Assembly of Guyana. Prior to the arrival, I was tasked with briefing my coworkers on the nation, given that several thought it was located in Africa. In hosting the delegation, I discovered that sugarcane in Guyana is still harvested by hand using what they call a 'cutlass', an object known to many as a machete. What gripped my attention was that the style of cutlass used in Guyana was specific to Guyana and a few close neighboring areas. It is an awesome artefact in appearance, looking like the three-foot long descendant of a pirate sword, machete, and Middle Eastern scimitar.

⁸⁵ Lewis Turco, *The Book of Literary Terms: The Genres of Fiction, Drama, Nonfiction, Literary Criticism, and Scholarship* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 81.



The author's personal cutlass, used in yardwork and to prepare overgrown grassland and forest areas for hunting. It has been used to easily (less than 10 chops) fell trees and scrubs with trunks greater than 2 inches in diameter.

One of the delegation members who became a close friend of mine sent me my first cutlasses. I was hooked. Weapons have always grabbed my attention. I have been around weapons and stories of weapons my entire life. Further, and perhaps this is more focused in America, my toys growing up were plastic swords and firearms. One of my earliest memories is riding with my grandfather in his sheriff's patrol car on a rainy afternoon when I was 3 years old to buy a wooden rifle at the drug store in our small town. Visits to museums with weapons collections and books about these artefacts allowed me to explore my interest.

Bricolage *History + Fieldwork + Culture + Investigations + Trademark Law*
+ *International Diplomacy*

History

I conducted research, digging into all aspects of cutlass culture in Guyana, cutlass design, manufacturers, and even sugarcane cultivation. I found fascinating details of how the cutlass was integrated not only into labor practices, but in other elements of Guyanese society ranging from

domestic violence (delivering bruises or even amputations), gang warfare, and material culture use-life. My research is ongoing and I am close to starting my second box of notes.

Fieldwork and Culture

In 2008, I took my research to the field and traveled to Guyana. During my trip, I visited a canecutter village and bought several cutlasses to document the wear and use life of the implement. During one such exchange, a man pedaled up to me on a bicycle. He stopped, dismounted the bike, and pulled an almost three-foot long cutlass out of his pants. I waited for a few seconds to determine if this was going to be a mugging, murder, or sale. Thankfully, he wanted to sell as he had some gambling to do that afternoon.

I also visited hardware stores to understand the cutlass market and gain samples from manufacturers selling in Guyana. During one such visit, I discovered a cutlass marketed under the "Alligator Brand" label. I knew, from my research, that this was attempting to emulate the Crocodile brand of the Ralph Martindale and Company of Birmingham, England. During my previous research, I had already made a contact at Martindale and knew its logo and cutlasses well.

While it may seem a small issue, this was trademark infringement and given the volume of cutlasses used in the sugarcane industry every year, it was a significant source of business. The Alligator brand was inferior in quality to the Martindale, yet its sticker could be easily confused for the more expensive English product. When first produced in the early 1800s, cutlass manufacturers had to use logos of animals or objects because canecutters were often illiterate.

That said, canecutters livelihoods depended on quality and they would not work unless provided the correct brand of cutlass, often demanding 'crocodile' or 'steamboat' cutlasses.⁸⁶



The sticker from the fraudulent cutlass brand.



The sticker from a legitimate Martindale cutlass.

Investigations, Trademark Law, and International Diplomacy

I dutifully bought a cutlass at the store as evidence and when I returned to the United States, I continued my research. Knowing a large amount of goods sold in Guyana come from Chinese manufacturers, I searched the internet for product catalogs of Chinese based companies. Using the model number of M321 (used to mimic the Martindale model M32L), I located the manufacturer who had several 'brands' it could produce under, including the Alligator brand in question.⁸⁷

I put all of my data together and sent it to my contact at Martindales. I had just completed my first international investigation. The excitement was extreme, especially when Martindales turned my report over to the British High Commission, which acted against the retailer. That said, I had to do something I never thought I could do in regards to this case — I had to rein in my

⁸⁶ G.C. Allen, *The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd, 1966), 136.

⁸⁷ Don Arp, Jr., "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses: A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana", *Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Practice* Vol. 9, No. 12 (December 2014), 999-1001: 1001.

enthusiasm. The story I had to tell was, I thought, riveting, but it lacked an ending. I had to wait a year until I returned to Guyana and revisited the hardware store. While the store still sold the off-brand cutlasses, all the stickers had been peeled off.

Conclusion

While using several fields to research the narrative, this article is primarily moved along by action. This action takes the form of my discovery of the violation while in Guyana and the investigation conducted that resulted in action being taken against the retailer by the British High Commission. This article is an excellent example of the synergy possible between active fieldwork and research in relevant fields such as history and trademark law.

7. "Go With the Flow: Using Anthropology to Expedite the Flow of the Classic Scramble Cafeteria".

Journal of Foodservice Business Research

Vol. 18, No. 2, pgs. 182-187.

Introduction

This article is included as it provides a good example of how my research approach can not only tell an academic story, but be used to solve real-world problems. Using methods from anthropology allowed me to gain knowledge that was crucial to addressing an interior design problem and a management budgetary issue. The article is also a good example of using narration. Hühn and Sommer defined narration as "a communicative act in which a chain of happenings is meaningfully structured and transmitted in a particular medium and from a particular point of view".⁸⁸ Narration was used more in this article as much of the narrative involved me directly and focused on my work trying to solve a cafeteria design and functionality issue for the hospital that employed me.

Cafeteria Issues

I used to work in a large hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska. I was part of the internal compliance team and was responsible for compliance investigations and business contract oversight. Each day at 11:15 am I would meet my lunch group in the hospital cafeteria. Our lunch group was interesting and somewhat famous in the hospital due to our punctuality and occasional executive

⁸⁸ Peter Hühn and Roy Sommer, "Narration in Poetry and Drama" in *The Living Handbook of Narratology. Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology, University of Hamburg*, 2012, accessed July 27, 2019, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/40.html>.

leadership guests. The core group was the director of security, the director of facilities, a senior decision support analyst, and me. From time to time, executive leadership would come by and join us, so it was normal for the hospital president or vice president of operations to pull up a chair and chat with us. Our discussions were wide-ranging, from hospital operations, movies, newspaper articles, or weekend plans. If asked a question, though, we always had an answer. Perhaps that is why the executives came by occasionally.

Spending a good deal of time in the cafeteria while I worked there (2010-2012) led to observations. At the time, I was finishing the last requirements for my Master's degree in anthropology, so I had the training necessary to study human behavior. Hospital cafeterias are unique spaces used for low key meetings between staff, as a respite from more hectic areas, a place to eat, and a place for families to either wait for news or deal with the delivery of news (happy or otherwise).

Unless the space was built in the last few years, hospital cafeterias are traditionally afterthoughts and as such are crammed into the last available square feet in the last corner. Design decisions usually stop at cutting the space in half, with one portion serving as seating and the other as kitchen and food selection area. Our cafeteria was no different. There was no flow to it. People backtracked in line, lines cut across other lines, nothing was in a space that made sense so you were always forgetting something after check out that forced you to re-enter the chaos. Sadly, acceptance was often the only response once you handled your anger. Cafeterias, until recently, have not been priorities for design or resources.

One week there was a happy confluence of events. That week I sat through one of my last classes for emerging leaders. The program, supposedly, prepared the best and brightest for future

leadership positions. The yearlong course had monthly classes. At the second to last class, we were given a capstone assignment. We had to work with a leader on a project and write a small paper on our experience. The very next day at lunch, the director of facilities, a regular for our group, said he was starting a workgroup to examine re-designing the cafeteria. I volunteered immediately. I also resolved immediately not to be a standard group member. The group had one focus: make the cafeteria as efficient to move through as possible. Given the non-profit nature of the facility, cafeteria sales were not as important to project success as being able to feed staff, patients, and visitors quickly.

Bricolage *Anthropology* + *Process Improvement* + *Hospital Management*
 + *Interior Design*

Anthropology and Process Improvement

I deployed my anthropology training, studying how people made meal decisions and constructed their breakfasts and lunches. I also leveraged my newly acquired (through the leadership course) Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt⁸⁹ and used a tool called a spaghetti diagram to track movements of folks through the cafeteria.

Interior Design

I researched modern movements in cafeteria design and discovered that the most forgotten space was now becoming a centerpiece of medical facilities, shopping malls and offices around the world. My research resulted in several findings, including needing to shift furniture to

⁸⁹ Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) Lean Six Sigma (Process Improvement Methodology) Yellow Belt, 2012.

improve flow and following decision-making, and moving condiments and silverware to a location in the seating area (we did not charge for them so why have them in the way before the cashier).⁹⁰

Moving silverware to reduce use is a proven cost-saving effort.⁹¹

Hospital Management

I showed up to the first meeting with data, maps, charts, and was fully conversant in the attributes of the 'modern scramble cafeteria'.⁹² This level of interest got me assigned to some site visit teams and we took tours of state-of-the-art cafeterias around town. About three weeks later, the hospital budget took a dive. The remodel was shelved, but they did move the silverware and condiments.

Such was business. Nevertheless, I had done some quality work using anthropology, design, and economics to develop a model for cafeteria design. I took my research and notes and set out to write an article explaining my use of anthropology field techniques in cafeteria design, along with establishing a model for design based on the decision-making process of cafeteria patrons.

Conclusion

This article is a good example of using multi-field research to solve a real-world practical problem. While elements of the article relate observation methods from anthropology and

⁹⁰ Don Arp, Jr., "Go With the Flow: Using Anthropology to Expedite the Flow of the Classic Scramble Cafeteria", *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* Vol. 18, No. 2 (2015), 182-187: 184-186.

⁹¹ J. C. Manuel, M. A. Sunseri, R. Olson, and M. Scolari, "A Diagnostic Approach to Increase Reusable Dinnerware Selection in a Cafeteria", *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 40, 2 (2007), 301-310: 301 and 302.

⁹² B. Hobza, "What's for lunch?" January 3, 2008, accessed December 28, 2011, www.dlrgroup.com/?p=4.2.7.

financial trends in hospital management, much of the article is related via narration as it follows my work as part of a group tasked with solving the cafeteria design issue.

8. "The Rats at Fort Clark".

The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal

Vol. 10 (2016), pgs. 37-47.

Introduction

I have included this article for two main reasons. First, the story feels real to me as I lived and worked at its location, Fort Clark, North Dakota. This personal contact made the characters so vivid in my mind: the rats; the Native Americans; and the fur trappers, especially a man named Francis Chardon. I walked where they walked. In regards to Chardon, I read his words where he had written them. I discovered evidence of manners of living in the broken nails and tools I excavated and by sitting in the circular depressions that had been earth lodges. Secondly, the story was the first since working on "Dusting the Past" where there were some strong human emotions to deal with. Much of my work, while it often addresses human behavior, deals predominantly with artefacts whereas this article explores lives. As will be detailed below, this story is not a happy one and details the evidence of significant human suffering as told by following the highs and lows of a rat population. This story is also, perhaps more so than any of my other articles, driven by the concept of setting, which Turco defines as a "locale and surrounding in which the narrative takes place".⁹³ The isolation of Fort Clark and the Mandan village made it feel like a separate world until the outside world touched it with smallpox. The environment and challenges to find resources all contribute to defining characters and framing the narrative.

⁹³ Turco, *The Book of Literary Terms*, 50.

Rats

During the summer of 2001, I was in archaeology field school at Fort Clark Historical Park in North Dakota (USA). Field school teaches students the art and science of archaeological excavation, which includes everything from digging with a sharpened brick trowel to surveying and cataloging. Fort Clark was a significant post during the western fur trade in North America and was occupied from 1830 to 1861. We were fortunate to have a rich documentary and pictorial history of the fort due to the travelers who recorded their visits in ink, pencil, and paint. One chief source was the journal of Francis A. Chardon.⁹⁴ The journal chronicled Chardon's time as post administrator and held details on all aspects of fort life, the fur trade, survival, and relations with the Native Americans who often traded furs with Chardon's company. For me, being at the site and having the ability to follow Chardon's observations in real space built a strong connection to the site and the story. Chardon's words capture the essence of a depressed, sometimes vengeful man who seemed always on the precipice of being driven insane by his experiences.

⁹⁴ Francis Chardon, *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997[1932]).



The Fort Clark site. The circular areas denote the lodges in the Mandan village. To the left of the roadway in the center is the field where the fort was built.

Bricolage *Memoir* + *Primary Sources* + *Zoology* + *Archaeology* + *Data Analysis*

Memoir

Out of all of Chardon's observations, one occurred somewhat regularly: details of his fight with a rat infestation. His journal entries recount killing thousands of rats, with the infestation so profound that a fort wall actually fell over after the rodents had chewed through the base of the logs.⁹⁵ I was gripped by the oddity of his biggest opponent — considering he faced hostile Native American tribes, horrible weather conditions, and fluctuating natural resources on a daily basis —

⁹⁵ Chardon, *Chardon's Journal*, 188 and 192.

was a bunch of rats. Further, his obsession provided data and this was a foothold to start digging and researching.

Primary Sources

Fort Clark, a post on the Missouri River, was next to a village of the Mandan tribe.⁹⁶ Those studying the fort are lucky that many famous travelers such as Prince Maximilian of Wied, Karl Bodmer, and John James Audubon all visited the post. This leads to a rich collection of historical documents and images that greatly aid exploring the fort.

These records were critical in understanding Chardon in particular. Examining different accounts found descriptions ranging from “an able but unscrupulous man, and something of a desperate character when his evil nature was aroused”⁹⁷ to “too notorious to inspire confidence.”⁹⁸ Given how much the Missouri River was travelled, accounts from other areas are also accessible, giving glimpses of other events in Chardon’s life, including his murder of several Blackfeet with a cannon and the subsequent scalp dance he held so the nearby tribe could see.⁹⁹

Zoology

Vitally important to understanding the rat infestation was understanding the rats themselves. The brown rat came from Siberia and China and expanded quickly as shipping and

⁹⁶ W. R. Wood, “Integrating Ethnohistory and Archaeology at Fort Clark State Historic Site, North Dakota,” *American Antiquity* 58, 3 (1993): 544.

⁹⁷ H. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1935), 372.

⁹⁸ R. Mattison, “Francis A. Chardon,” in ed. L. Hafen *Fur Traders, Trappers and Mountain Men of the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 61-63.

⁹⁹ C. Larpenteur and E. Coues (ed.), *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), 218-219.

commerce connected the world, Europe was overrun by 1809.¹⁰⁰ The brown rats were vicious, often killing the black rat wherever encountered. Once the brown rat gained a foothold, it quickly multiplied, producing 12 litters a year, each of around 10 young. Further, brown rats are not fussy about food and are “exceedingly versatile in their food habits is one of the most familiar facts about them.”¹⁰¹ And a colony could consume a lot a food. One story from a slaughterhouse in France noted that, “It was stated that the carcasses of the slaughtered horses, which sometimes amounted to thirty-five a day, were cleared to the bone by rats in the course of the following night.”¹⁰²

Archaeology

The sporadic archaeological investigations conducted (1973-73, 1986, 2000, 2001)¹⁰³ showed that brown rat remains accounted for a large percentage of the faunal remains found at the Fort Clark site.¹⁰⁴

Data Analysis

Several approaches were clear to me. First, clearly, involved the kill-data recorded by Chardon. Graphing the mostly monthly data and looking for trends would provide insights. Second, understanding the natural history and behaviors of the rat would give these trends potential cause and context. Third, comparing this to the history of the fort and nearby Native

¹⁰⁰ Graham Twigg, *The Brown Rat* (London: David & Charles, 1975), 22.

¹⁰¹ Twigg, *Brown Rat*, 44.

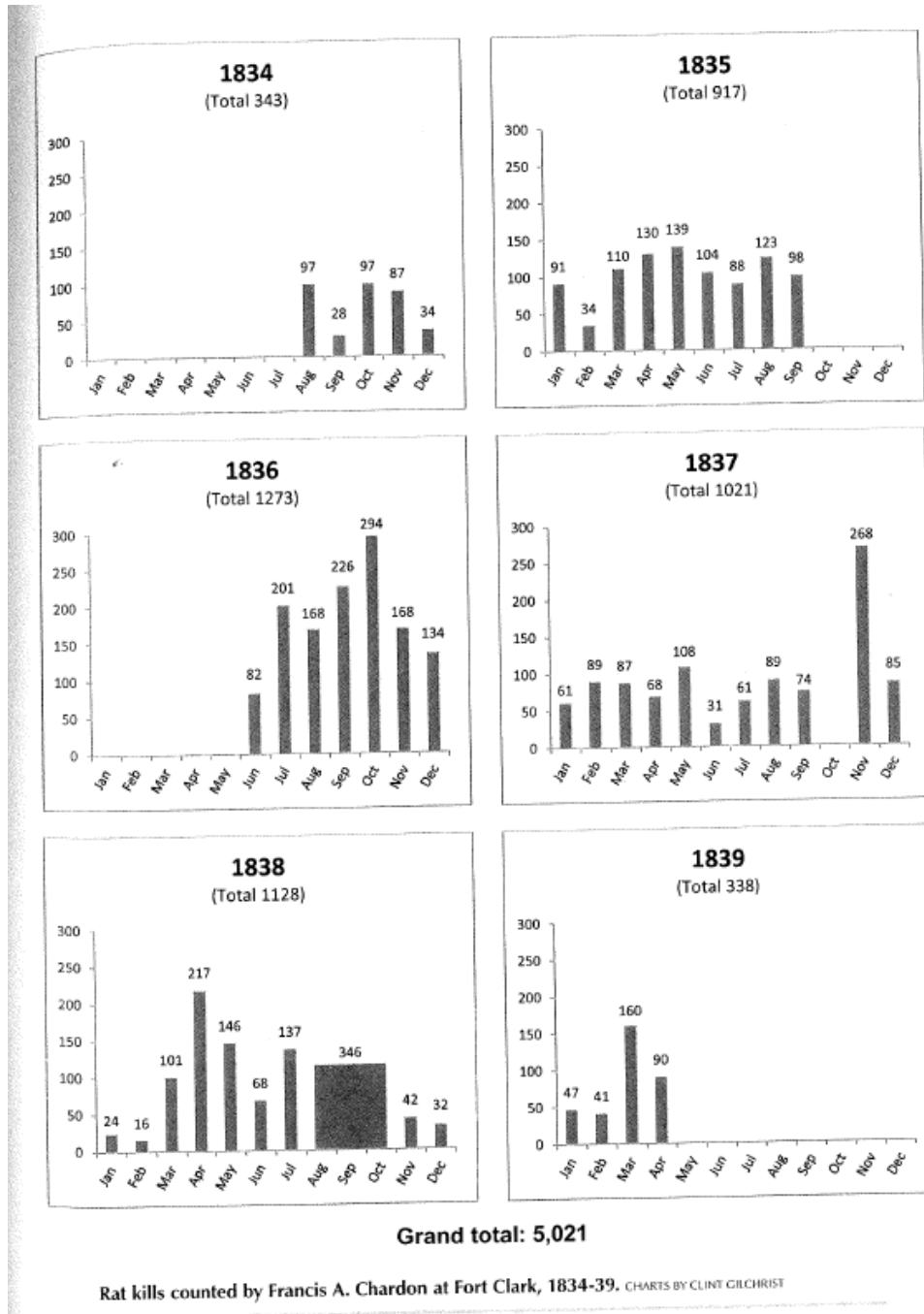
¹⁰² Twigg, *Brown Rat*, 74-75.

¹⁰³ W. R. Wood, W. J. Hunt, R.H. Williams, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors: A Trading Post on the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Bill Hunt, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2003.

American village also provided depth for any trends observed. Fourth, was Chardon himself. He was depressed, manic, and bored, and this clearly had an impact on the story of the rat infestation.

I collected the kill data from his monthly entries. After graphing the data, I looked for trends or anomalies.



Most of the trends corresponded to events like bad weather or just natural patterns in rat birthing. However, a huge spike in rat killing told a sad story of a population ravaged by disease. This spike occurred one month after a devastating smallpox outbreak at the Native American village.¹⁰⁵ Well over a thousand died, too many to be buried. The corpses served as a significant food source for the rats, who used the readily available calories to increase their numbers. I concluded that the spike in rats killed in the fort meant they had exhausted the supply of bodies in the village and needed a new food source.

Conclusion

“The Rats of Fort Clark” provides an interesting story of human existence recorded not only in history books, but also in the patterns of rat population growth as evidenced by the rats killed in the fort and recorded in a journal. This is one of my few works that engages at any level with human emotion. In doing so, I had to deal with the emotional nature of the events of which I wrote. I lived at the site as part of the excavation team. Each shovel scoop or scratch in the dirt made the story that much more real. The characters, compelling in their own rights, were made even more powerful considering their perseverance in a landscape that did not want them and as settlement changed the region. And it can be seen that setting is critical to the story as it at times isolates and challenges the characters, but when it is opened to contact from the outside world the results are devastating.

¹⁰⁵ C.D. Dollar, “The High Plains Smallpox Epidemic of 1837-38” *Western Historical Quarterly* 8, 1 (1977). R. Beaglehole, R. Bonita, and T. Kjellstrom, *Basic Epidemiology* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1993).

9. "The Bloomfield Throwing Knife: Analyzing an Improvised Shuriken to Appreciate the Derived Artifact".

Arms & Armour: Journal of the Royal Armouries

Vol. 13, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 62-69.

Introduction

This article leverages multi-field research to give value to a seemingly meaningless piece of metal. It shows that there is great value in everyday articles, even what may seem like junk. Further, the avenues of inquiry range from culture to design and fan labor. Moving from a small town in Nebraska where the artefact was found to the modern shopping mall and its Asian weapons stores to the workshop of the fan, makes scenes important to this story. Turco defined scene as "a lesser unit of the drama than an act".¹⁰⁶ Each scene or step takes us deep into understanding why a chunk of metal left in a telephone pole is actually an example of a culture and design.

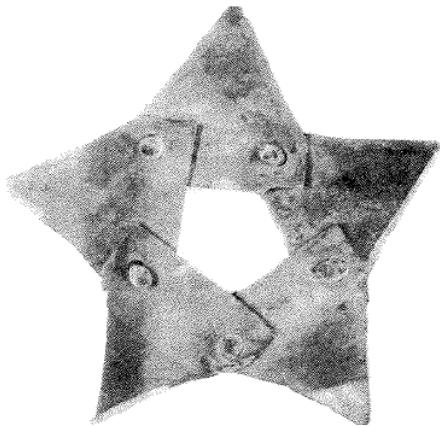
Throwing Knife

One day, while working for state government, I was walking to my car when a man on the sidewalk took offense to either my presence or a figment of his imagination. He began yelling and gesturing, but I just took my chances and walked by him without acknowledgement. In recounting the event to my father, he said I was lucky I had not been stabbed with a fork. Yes, a fork! I asked what he meant and he said a trend was developing in the homeless community of bending metal

¹⁰⁶ Turco, *The Book of Literary Terms*, 104.

forks into a weapon a lot like brass knuckles, but with the tines pointing outward. A fork turned into a weapon was a mystifying combination of weirdness and a maddening lack of detail. I had to know more.

I knew that the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* often published short pieces on strange items found by law enforcement officers around the United States. I visited the University of Nebraska Library and thumbed through decades of issues, finding an image of the fork weapon. My attention would have been locked on this oddity had I not found another object. While I flipped pages, I discovered what was called the Bloomfield Throwing Knife, a large bladed weapon (slightly more than 5 inches in diameter) with five points that was interesting in appearance but even more interesting given that it was found in Bloomfield, Nebraska. Home state advantage — the punching fork could wait.¹⁰⁷



The Bloomfield Throwing Knife as it appeared in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.

The photograph of the weapon was faded and the paragraph of text was simple. Law enforcement, regardless of where you are, is a fraternity and if you are a family member you are part of it. I knew being the son of a police officer would open doors, as would my pursuit at the

¹⁰⁷ "Throwing Knife", *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (November 1977), back cover.

time of a certificate in forensic science. I used this background as a basis for an email to the police department in Bloomfield. It was a long shot, given that the photograph was about 30 years old. I was in luck. From the police department I was referred to a county sheriff who was the actual officer who discovered the weapon embedded in a telephone pole. The sheriff gave me a few additional details, but admittedly knew little more about it or the current whereabouts of the artefact.

Bricolage *Material Culture* + *Design* + *Fan Labor*

Material Culture

While the story of the item as an artefact of law enforcement was somewhat limited, I found several avenues to pursue in seeing it as a purposefully designed and constructed object. On one front, it was made from items readily available on a Nebraska farm. The 'points' were identified in the short caption as blades from a type of tall grass mower and the riveting was simple and hammered. The item was large, slightly over 5 inches in diameter, but was clearly inspired by the shuriken or throwing stars made famous in martial arts movies.¹⁰⁸

Design

I found an interesting question. The artefact was inspired by the movies, but was not a direct copy or an entirely new design. In reading on object design, I found a rather loose spectrum of design sophistication that included simple copying before a designer makes his or her own

¹⁰⁸ Diagram Group, *The New Weapons of the World Encyclopedia* (New York: Diagram Group, 2007), 76-81.

truly original pieces. This object was somewhere in between, at a stage I called the 'derived'.¹⁰⁹ It was not a copy, but it was not new either and in defining its place, this forgotten object now had a value — it was not just a piece of junk. It was an artefact of human behavior.

Fan Labor

As noted before, sourcing the inspiration for the artefact was easy enough given the ubiquity of martial arts as an element of western media. The James Bond film *You Only Live Twice* (1967), provided American audiences with its first depiction of 'ninjas'. Subsequently, martial arts culture flourished in the United States, both in the form of practitioners in martial arts schools, but also in the production of cheap and somewhat dangerous martial arts merchandise, like throwing stars and nunchucks, sold in American malls to teenagers — the so-called 'mall ninjas'.¹¹⁰ The Bloomfield artefact was an act of labor, however, and that framed it in the movement now known as 'fan labor' wherein fans participate in a beloved media property by constructing props from that story universe.¹¹¹ This allowed them to participate in the mythology at a deeper level than simple viewership. Some anthropologists, like Mithen, believe cave paintings to have a similar envisioning/participation purpose with hunters living out a fantasy hunt and/or practicing for a new one by making or viewing the paintings.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Don Arp, Jr., "The Bloomfield Throwing Knife: Analyzing an Improvised Shuriken to Appreciate the Derived Artifact". *Arms & Armour: Journal of the Royal Armouries* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2016), 62-69: 64.

¹¹⁰ Urban Dictionary: www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Mall%20Ninja&defid=6696880; accessed on March 6, 2014.

¹¹¹ A. De Kosnik, "Fandom as Free Labor," in *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory* ed. T. Scholz (New York: Routledge, 2013), 98-111: 109. A. Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). 195.

¹¹² S. Mithen, *Thoughtful Foragers: A Study of Prehistoric Decision Making*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 250.

From tracking down each attribute of the artefact, a story became clear: an object made of mower parts to resemble a throwing star was crafted by a fan of martial arts movies and tested on a phone pole wherein it was unrecoverable until found by law enforcement. Further, this object provides insight into the spectrum of object design by evidencing the 'derived' stage of designer maturity.

Conclusion

This article uses multiple fields to investigate an artefact and determine if it has worth as an artefact or is just a piece of junk. Using several fields finds that the artefact is more than it appears and follows a flow of scenes from the telephone pole where it was discovered through martial arts culture and design theory. Each scene builds the identity and importance of this artefact.

10. "The Edges of the Empire: The Symbolism of Bladed Weapons in Orwell's *Burmese Days*".

George Orwell Studies

Vol. 1, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 107-115.

Introduction

This article was chosen because it not only uses several diverse fields, such as weapons history and linguistics, but also uses what may be a new avenue of inquiry, analysis of typesetting, to attempt to discern an author's intent and motives in constructing a novel's symbolic aspects. This article relies heavily on point of view. Turco notes that, "In the character-oriented viewpoint a character in the story narrates, either a major character (protagonist or antagonist) or a minor character".¹¹³ As I explore the symbolism of the bladed weapons in the story, a handful of viewpoints are raised and take over the narrative. The white British residents, the Burmese, the Gurkhas, the Burmese outside of the story, and even the author himself are examined to fully understand the symbolism explored.

Orwell's Burma

To this day, I have no idea why I found *Burmese Days*. I remember walking into a bookstore and then leaving some time later with a copy. It feels like I was there with the intent of buying it, but that is difficult because I am certain I did not know it existed. It could have been its subject matter of a colonial outpost during the dying decades of the empire. Or the Orwellian promise of

¹¹³ Turco, *The Book of Literary Terms*, 54.

a realistic and satisfyingly unhappy ending. I found it and have been mesmerized ever since. It is my favorite book and every time I am requested to donate or gift a favorite book, I find a fresh copy of *Burmese Days* to throw on the pile.

The book is rich with cultural details gleaned from Orwell's time as a police officer in Burma and his exposure to British colonial society that he hated and Burmese society that he appreciated but at times also seemed to undervalue, if not hate. There are tones of militarism in the book, as the powers that be figure out how to hold on to power and those that are subjugated search for the final surge to push off their oppressors. As I read the novel, a pattern became apparent to me, mostly because I have a special interest in weapons. Each side of the conflict seemed to be represented by a distinct yet native Asian bladed weapon. The empire was behind the mighty Gurkha kukri and the Burmese were behind the only item they were allowed to have that could be a weapon, the dah. While the dah appears in the text more than the kukri, both present an interesting perspective on colonial relations and symbolism thereof.

Bricolage *Material Culture*
 (Weapons History) + *Literary Analysis* + *Linguistics* + *Typesetting*

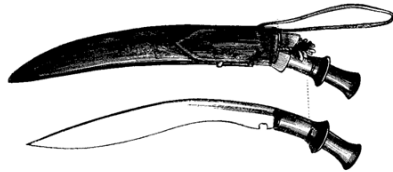
Material Culture (Weapons History)

I opened the article with a simple observation: "Many cultures around the world have a unique style of national weapon that can have a pervasive role in daily activities and can be a significant aspect of cultural tradition and identity."¹¹⁴ Orwell himself even saw the great role of

¹¹⁴ Don Arp, Jr. "The Edges of the Empire: The Symbolism of Bladed Weapons in Orwell's *Burmese Days*". *George Orwell Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2016), 107-115: 107.

weapons: "It is a commonplace that the history of civilization is largely the history of weapons."¹¹⁵

The impact of swords was significant for, as famed explorer and soldier Sir Richard Francis Burton noted, "The history of the sword is the history of humanity."¹¹⁶



A traditional Gurkha kukri

In Orwell's *Burmese Days*, two weapons play critical yet subtle roles in the events of the novel. First, the kukri, weapon of the fearsome Gurkhas of Nepal, is a large weapon of concave design.

"With few exceptions, they carry in their girdle their national 'khukri,' or curved knife, a well-balanced instrument, which they know full well how to use. It is in general use for all domestic purposes; also a heavy one is used in warfare and for slaughtering buffaloes, and they have been known to sever a buffalo's neck at a single blow with such a knife."¹¹⁷

Second was the Burmese dah: "There is in Burma a kind of a large knife called a dah which is a useful agricultural as well as a domestic implement, and in most of the murders the dah plays a

¹¹⁵ George Orwell, "You and the Atom Bomb" in *George Orwell: In Front of Your Nose, 1946-1950*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Boston: David R. Godine Publisher, 2000 [1945]), 7-10: 7.

¹¹⁶ Richard F. Burton, *The Book of the Sword* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1987 [1884]), xv.

¹¹⁷ Anonymous, *The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway: Illustrated Guide for Tourists* (London: McCorquodale and Co., 1896), 18.

prominent part."¹¹⁸ The Burmese dah's "blade is slightly curved, single-edged and usually tapers to a point . . ."¹¹⁹



The Burmese dah

Understanding the function of each blade and its role in each culture was critical to proving my thesis:

"In the novel, two such national weapons, the Gurkha kukri and the Burmese dah, each symbolise an opposing side in the struggles gripping colonial Burma. The kukri represents the ready violence, might, and glee of subjugation wielded by the British authorities. Against this tool of empire, is the dah. The dah represents the adjacent possible – the unrealised potential of violence – of the oppressed Burmese and is the item that provides a sense of identity and an edge to strike against the empire."¹²⁰

Literary Analysis

The analysis of the kukri was simpler, as it appears only once in the novel. The dah appears much more and thus presents various situations in which its appearance can be analyzed. Doing

¹¹⁸ Khim Maung, (1928) "A Burmese Portrait", *The Rotarian* (April 1928), 12-15: 13.

¹¹⁹ Frederick Wilkinson, "India and Southeast Asia" in *Swords and Hilt Weapons* ed. Michael Coe (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993), 186-203: 198.

¹²⁰ Arp, *Edges of the Empire*, 107-108.

so was critical to move the dah from artifact — an object with a “particular cultural function” — to a social object or “an object of which the meaning is shared by a community”.¹²¹

First, I found the dah to be a symbol of native identity as it is seen in many of the daily life scenes of the novel, ignored by the Europeans for its normalcy. Further, the only European seen wielding a dah is the main character Flory, who secretly understood the Burmese.

Second, I found that many in the novel did not realize the power of the dah and that it was a mocked symbol. Ma Kin, wife of U Po Kyin, the chief evil doer of the novel, makes fun of the Burmese and the dah: “They are very foolish, those villagers. What can they do with their dahs and spears against the Indian soldiers? They will be shot down like wild animals”.¹²²

Third, I found the dah to be a weapon against empire, for it was the Burmese only means of resistance, one they used in fact to chop the character Maxwell to death. It also plays a key role in the major protest event of the novel, but the Burmese are careful not to use the dah beyond waving it in the air: “Probably the Burmans had not used their dahs for fear of provoking rifle-fire.”¹²³ The role of the dah as a weapon against empire is seen more clearly in Orwell’s essay “Shooting an Elephant”, where it is used by the Burmese to butcher the dying elephant, an animal that clearly embodies the British Empire, with some, like Meyers noting the event “symbolizes the death throes of the British Empire”.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Jonathan Matusitz, *Symbolism in Terrorism: Motivation, Communication, and Behavior* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2014), 207.

¹²² George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1974 [1934]), 138.

¹²³ Orwell, *Burmese Days*, 251.

¹²⁴ Jeffrey Meyers, *Orwell: Wintry Conscience of a Generation*, (London/New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 72.

Linguistics and Typesetting

One clue supporting my symbolic interpretation of the dah rested in something that was fairly obvious, but yet easy to overlook: the linguistics of the novel and its typesetting. In *Burmese Days*, Orwell places Burmese and Hindi words, like dah, in italics. However, kukri is not italicized, which I interpreted to mean that Orwell saw the word and the weapon as a word of the empire and no longer of a native language. Interesting, other words associated with the empire like memsahib, punkah, sahib, sepoy, and topi also avoid italics.

Conclusion

Exploring the symbolism of bladed weaponry in Orwell's *Burmese Days* relies greatly on the different points of view accessible in the story and Orwell's other works. These viewpoints illustrate a complex symbolism of failed imperial power and unused Burmese potential during the tense years at the end of the Empire. Using different fields of inquiry, including extrapolating meaning from typesetting methods, made exploration of this symbolism and its impact on the novel's narrative possible.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explores the most complex element of my approach to producing academic research articles. At the forefront, each entry in this chapter addresses in depth the use of Webb and Brien's Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach and the value multi-field research has on developing a compelling narrative.

Looking at these articles, it is helpful to consider what each might look like should a field of inquiry and insight have been deleted. What would "Dusting the Past" have been without knowing the purpose of the clay tablets? Would "Forced Perspective" have been possible without conducting the fieldwork that collected police officer opinions? Deleting a field would have resulted in less engaging stories that did not do justice to the subjects explored. If researched through a single specialty, much of the depth and identity of the subjects would have been undiscovered. For me, it would be like trying to read a book with random chapters removed.

Further, these articles evidence the use of other elements and tools from Creative Writing. Articles discussed in this chapter cover the following elements: plot, style, motif, character, conflict, action, narration, setting, scene, and point of view. While these tools are traditionally used to craft such works as novels, short stories, and plays, these elements of Creative Writing can now be seen as valuable components in the production of research articles.

I am not a specialist in any of the fields leveraged in these articles. That said, being able to operate across these disciplines, pulling in what is needed from wherever it could be found is the very nature of research in Creative Writing, especially as explained in the Bricoleur-Bowerbird concept of Webb and Brien. What I have done is taken research, as it has always existed in Creative

Writing, along with the tools of the field and used it all to produce peer-reviewed articles instead of a novel, poem, or play.

CHAPTER 3: BOWERBIRD: COLLECTING BLUE BITS AND BUILDING A NEST

If a writer is going to run rampant across academic fields, collecting whatever insights he deems relevant to his current investigation, he needs to have a tether to some unifying skillset, otherwise it will be impossible to bring these pieces together into any substantive and accessible form. The facts I gathered could have been put together in any form including poems, novels, plays, articles, books, movies, paintings, sculpture – any creative endeavor that produces an artefact. However, for me, the form is nonfiction writing for a peer-reviewed academic publication.

In fact, the written artefact of my research benefits from skills that are aligned to creative practice. Webb and Brien quoted Shawn Gillen on this point: “the diligence of a reporter, the shifting voices and viewpoints of a novelist, the refined wordplay of a poet and the analytical modes of the essayist.”¹²⁵ If peer-review were part of the previous quote, it would be an accurate summation of what I do. I research until I hit the end, look at all aspects of the subject, analyze it all, and write about it in a manner that will engage the reader as much as the subject engaged me. The sections below explore my writing habits and methods or how, like the bowerbird, I construct a nest by picking what I need from what is available.

A SUGGESTION ON HOW TO READ THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, I will address the elements of how I practice as a writer, progressing through the following topics: notes; writing environs; titles; starting points; facts; typing; construction; translation; review via reading aloud; and proofreading. Each of these elements highlights work

¹²⁵ Webb and Brien, ‘Ancient Quarrel’, 196.

done for a specific article. Instead of following a chronological publication history, articles have been selected that best evidence the element being discussed.

MAKING NOTES

For my articles up to and including “Dusting the Past”, I kept all of my documents and materials in order using three-ring binders. Nothing about a research project could escape three-hole punching and being sorted into orderly categories guarded by dutifully labeled divider tabs. I also had a preference for photocopying. This led to rather huge binders full of material that were cumbersome and difficult to use. By the time I started work on “Jukker”, even though it did not require nearly as much material as “Dusting the Past”, I could see I was collecting too much. Most of what I archived for “Dusting the Past” never appeared in the article. Further, the process was inefficient. As I loved to photocopy, these binders become huge tomes that required sub-tabbing, highlighting, margin notes, and then guesswork to find the relevant bits my mind recalled but that my fingers could not find in the haystack of paper.

In the early research phase of “Jukker” I shifted to what seemed like a more efficient archiving system. I used two items: a book-bound notebook and a folder. Ideally, the notebook must be small, thus my preference for a pocket-sized Moleskine, although some projects require larger notebooks. My rule of thumb is that the notebook should be able to be easily carried in a pants or jacket pocket or if too large, carried in hand comfortably. Often, my research trips are intermingled with other events like business meetings and dinner, and I don’t want to show up with a gigantic notebook. Notebooks invite attention, often with questions, and I am not ready to share my work until it is published.

In the notebook, I write down the quotes from the reference material that move the story along for me. I treat these quotes as a journalist would handle quotes from an interview. Much of the structure of my article will follow a mission of knitting these quotes together into a narrative. Herein rests one challenge of notetaking and working across disciplines. Sometimes, such as in researching "Dusting the Past", I operated in each field separately, so my notes all seemed to focus on fingerprints until I switched topics and cuneiform signs became the prominent note subject. It takes a lot of effort to then cross these note boundaries in constructing the narrative.

These notebooks also contain, in different colors of ink if possible, the thoughts that come to mind while taking notes and recording quotes. If I don't have two colors of pen, then I usually box the note and write something like "Me" and "Mine" next to it to denote it belongs to me and not a source. If the subject of the article has a visual element, like an artefact, my notebook also holds sketches or a glued image of the object. This page usually, but not always, serves as a collection point for the visual notes and quotes, depending on how many I find. Second, I keep a file folder with photocopies, usually the source material of the quotes I have recorded in my notebook. I like to have the source material to double check if my notes are hard to read or if I need to verify a citation. My goal is to never consult this folder until I write the article and that at a moment's notice all I need to grab for a research trip is the one notebook.

WRITING ENVIRONS

When I sit to write an article, I embody what Zinsser once said of writers: "professional writers are solitary drudges who seldom see other writers."¹²⁶ While some writers get energized

¹²⁶ William Zinsser, *On Writing Well* (New York: Harper, 2016), 4.

by talking about writing or authoring their latest work in some type of writers' commune or coffee shop, I demand solitude and a lack of distraction. Trying to remember a quote or some slight turn of phrase from a source is tough enough without smelling someone's lunch. Kidder described it well, noting that "The act of writing is a zone I occupy, a psychological space. After a while I lose self-consciousness and all sense of time."¹²⁷

For me, writing is a solitary art practiced in a cloistered environment, with the only intruders allowed being my dog or the doorbell denoting the delivery of lunch. I need my notebooks, folders, room to spread a mess, and space to walk and pace. I have tried to write away from my home office and I don't care for it. I like my knick-knacks, books, and the memorabilia of my adventures. Oddly, one item that has been a writing partner for well-over a decade and has done quality service as paperweight, bookmark, pointer, fidget device, and implement of self-defense (only used against spiders) is an old Spanish bayonet. One day, while perusing the so-called 'bargain cave' of a large outdoor goods retailer in the United States, I found a bayonet tucked in a glass cabinet full of rifle scopes, duck calls, cameras, and walkie talkies — hardly the company a Toledo blade should be keeping. I asked the clerk the price; the reported \$3 made it a steal and so it was rescued. No one would now hack at a tree branch with it as a 'camp knife' or dig a hole with it or use it to weed a garden or use it to open paint cans. Instead, it would help me wrestle with thoughts and words. Once, I even wrote a haiku about it:

A Toledo blade,
crafted for a war unfought.
A tool now for thoughts.

¹²⁷ Tracy Kidder, "Field Notes to Full Draft" in *Telling True Stories* eds. M. Kramer and W. Call (New York: Plume Books, 2007), 51.

As I write this sentence, the bayonet sits holding a book open and ever-ready for its next scholarly mission.

Writing “Forced Perspective” took a fair amount of this total solitude to tackle the topic, subtopics, and keep the threads straight. Each element was complicated and needed a frame of reference to make it accessible to the reader, but also still relate to the conclusion. I needed to root racial profiling nationally, and then quickly shift to my data and give it context within the State of Nebraska itself. I explored racial profiling in detail, the failures of statistics and data systems to actually identify racial profiling. From this perspective, I then examined the data from my interviews, showing that not only were statistics a mess, collection systems were faulty and not user-based. This then allowed a final examination of the rampant fallacies in data collection approaches. Distractions would have prevented me from tracking each issue through to the end and may have negatively impacted the conclusions I was able to make because of the intricacies I observed. And there are distractions enough in the process already. Having notebooks open, charts taped to the wall, at least three browser windows open searching for sources to back a new point that was discovered can all be tough enough to deal with.

TITLES

While perhaps not the first words every writer sets down when authoring his or her work, the title is an important diplomat of the work. Goodman noted, “The real beginning of your book — or essay, poem, story — is its title. Think about it. The title is the first word or set of words the

reader reads.”¹²⁸ Goodman also brought to light an important point: few writers seem to care about titles. He noted, ““They will go with the first title that comes to mind. Or, with the second. They don’t devote the time and effort required to produce a good title, because, I think, they don’t see it as crucial.”¹²⁹ That said, others, like Bernard, see titles another way: “Authors face this dilemma with every new book they write: Does the title really matter?”¹³⁰

I fall into the Goodman camp. Titles are critically important to me. Once I decide it is time to write, I collect my notebook and folder and retreat to my desk, as discussed previously, to tackle turning the bits of research into a cogent narrative. I start with the title. Not a title outline, sketch, nor placeholder, but an actual, fully worded title. Without it, I am lost. McCool, in his work on cross-cultural writing, tackled the issue and value of titles, writing:

“The title is a conceptual anchor for a paper, and its role varies according to cultural values and beliefs. Some cultures place less emphasis on titles because they are perceived to have an ornamental and therefore less important function. Cultures on the other end of the spectrum emphasize the power of a good title, which grounds the paper within a larger context.”¹³¹

Levithan added to this, writing:

“The title you give a story -- whether it ends up being your final title, or whether it’s just a placeholder -- is your North Star. If you have a placeholder that doesn’t feel right, you

¹²⁸ Richard Goodman, *The Soul of Creative Writing* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 77.

¹²⁹ Goodman, *The Soul of Creative Writing*, 78.

¹³⁰ A. Bernard, *Now All We Need is a Title: Famous Book Titles and How They Got That Way* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 5.

¹³¹ M. McCool, *Writing Around the World: A Guide To Writing Across Cultures* (London: A&C Black, 2009), 69.

have to ask yourself why it doesn't feel right, and that, too, can guide you to where you need to be, because it shows you where you shouldn't go."¹³²

I also believe what Levithan says about trusting your title. He suggests, "If you're stuck, go back to it. Ask yourself why it's important. And by following what's important to you, you may just end up with something that will be important to other people."¹³³

I sometimes suffer from a proclivity to chase distractions that come up while writing. Perhaps a new item or question reveals itself. Sometimes, these side trips are worth it and add new dimensions to the article. Most of the time, they are traps. Every time I feel myself approaching a fork in the road, I re-read the title and make a decision: does the new area conform to the title? If not, I then ask myself is the new area important enough to change the title. While I may tweak a title to make it sound better, I cannot recall a time I changed a title to expand the scope of an article.

McCool noted that, "The goal of a reader responsible title is to reveal the thematic purpose of the paper. Creative titles are encouraged among reader responsible cultures, meeting human rather than practical needs."¹³⁴ This conforms to what Goodman highlighted as the essential elements for a good title: it has to be "memorable" and "true to the essence, to the soul, of the book."¹³⁵ For me, it depends greatly on the nature of the work and the potential journals that might be a home for my work. Some editors support creativity more than others do. Looking back

¹³² David Levithan, "Write Start: David Levithan on [Insert Strong Title Here]", January 8, 2015, accessed April 26, 2019, https://www.signature-reads.com/2015/01/write-start-david-levithan-on-insert-strong-title-here/38593/?ref=insyn_corp_bio-writestartintro

¹³³ Levithan, "Write Start".

¹³⁴ McCool, *Writing Around the World*, 70.

¹³⁵ Goodman, *The Soul of Creative Writing*, 81.

over a sample of titles (several articles and one book) for works I have written, in addition to the works explored in this Context Statement, gives a perspective on what kind of titles I like for my work:

- *Breeze of the Gods: The Mythology, History, and Complications of Perfume in Ancient Greece*
- "Talk the Walk: Enhance Data Collection During Process Walks by Asking the Right Questions"
- "'Woman Scans Skylight for Finger Prints': The Story of Omaha Police Fingerprint Expert Emily Byram"
- "An 'Unknown Weapon' of Ancient Egypt: Identifying a Mystery Weapon from the Work of Sir Richard Francis Burton".
- "The Old Precinct House is New Again: The Use of Neighborhood Substations in Lincoln, Nebraska"
- "Battlefield Oddities: Two Minié Balls from Pea Ridge National Military Park (1862)".
- "Hunting the Dragons: TR and the World's Crocodilians".
- "The Fist of Odysseus: Possible Early Signs of an Unarmed Combat System in Ancient Greece."

Being creative with titles can necessitate the need for a subtitle. Take, for example, the article examined in this Context Statement: "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses: A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana". If left only to the main title, "Alligators, Crocodiles, and

Cutlasses”, it could be about anything including zoology, pirates, tanks, and even classic American cars. With the clarifying subtitle, “A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana”, the reader can at least develop a narrowed concept of the subject matter and content of the article. Wolcott noted this need for subtitles, writing, “The catchier it is, the greater the need for a subtitle that gives a clear indication as to content.”¹³⁶

This all begs one question: why the more complicated and creative titles? For me, they are just more fun. A straight forward, plain title tells me that the words to follow are going to be just as plain and straight forward — in other words, super boring. Also, while the arguments in my articles and the words used to construct them are mine, they are mostly built on the work of others given that I knit insights together, using quotes like interview dialogue, to form the narrative. The title is my chance to own the work and make it mine. McCool acknowledges this as a fundamental purpose of the title: “It is possible that another reason why titles are important among reader responsible cultures is that they exemplify a rare opportunity to stamp one’s unique signature on a paper.”¹³⁷

In writing “Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses”, the title came together thanks to the animal symbolism involved and the term ‘cutlass’. Some articles suffer for a while because the key terms involved are not as immediately engaging as ‘crocodile’ or ‘cutlass’. For example, “Forced Perspective” took a while to title because of the highly technical elements involved such as data and police procedure. Others, such as “Go with the Flow”, almost wrote themselves.

¹³⁶ H. Wolcott, *Writing Up Qualitative Research*. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2001), 142.

¹³⁷ McCool, *Writing Around the World*, 70.

Although titles should be eye-catching, simplicity can work against the writer or may not fulfill the total vision for the title. In writing the subtitle for "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses", I wanted credit for what I thought was some solid research and investigative work. After all, I had uncovered international trademark infringement! Establishing this in the subtitle set the tone for the article and was what led me to write it like an investigatory report, letting the evidence tell the story.

STARTING POINT

When I started to write "Dusting the Past", I was still rather new to writing and publishing, with fewer than five articles appearing in both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications. I was still discovering what worked for me, especially how to get started on actually putting words to paper instead of just looking through my research materials. This article would be a direct response to some criticism I received from the editor of the museum newsletter in which I had been a bit romantic in relating the personal significance of finding the fingerprint. While still based on the fingerprint discovery, "Dusting the Past" needed to contribute to the fields of forensic science and archaeology.

As I knew the material regarding the tablet and its fingerprints the best, I started there, crafting the evidence-based narrative that was supported by some of the visual elements seen in this Context Statement, but it was rough going. Of the whole process, the research was the most interesting to me at the time (I have since come to love the challenge of both the chase and the writing). Finding the details and piecing them together has the cerebral and emotional rewards. At this point in my research career, I had to push myself to write. One of my writing mentors, Dr.

Joe Goecke, once told me the worst part of pursuing a doctorate was not the years of research — he found that time fascinating as he searched for his answers. The part that was most trying was writing it up, because the thrill of the hunt was gone. Joe said finding your way through this apathy was critical if someone was ever going to be a writer who actually ever wrote anything.

Joe was right, but there is more to it. While content can interest some readers, the creative writer, especially one knitting seemingly different fields together to produce a nonfiction narrative on a research topic, needs to impart energy to the work. Lopate acknowledged this, writing, “For me, the great adventure in reading nonfiction is to follow, as I say, a really interesting, unpredictable mind struggle to entangle and disentangle itself in a thorny problem, or even a frivolous problem that is made complex through engagement with a sophisticated mind.”¹³⁸ The success of the piece rests on its ability to engage readers.

I faced a similar issue of where to start and how to engage readers when I worked on “An Eye for an Eye”. Given that most readers would not be familiar with the Nebraska State Capitol, I placed a large amount of material about the design of the capitol upfront to provide a context for why the Hammurabi and cuneiform elements were on the capitol. From there, I examined the inscription in detail, both its engraving, cultural implications of its vocabulary, and the impact this has on finding a reliable translation. While a large portion of my article involved explaining the nuances of social stratification in ancient Babylon, this was done in order to properly frame the meaning of the text within the greater whole of the story told by the sculpture on the exterior of the capitol. I concluded by noting the importance of understanding the social and historical

¹³⁸ Lopate, *To Show and To Tell*, 6.

contexts for the inscriptions in order to truly understand what they mean and how these meanings impact us as we use them to exemplify our legal history and political stance.

FACTS

Lopate notes that as a writer of creative nonfiction, “The materials I am working with in nonfiction are facts and truths.”¹³⁹ Taking it even further, Boo notes, “While writing you must exert maniacal control over those facts.”¹⁴⁰ Sticking to the facts and checking these facts against other facts and sources is critical to making sure information is correct. Gutkind expresses this concern in writing “journalists (and historians, anthropologists, attorneys. etc.) rely on sources — documents and interviews and testimonies to assure truth and accuracy — but how do they know if the documents are accurate or the witness’ perceptions valid?”¹⁴¹ I believe even a flawed conclusion based on facts is more defensible than an unfounded or invented statement or finding. The facts are an armor and must be used, just like a deep-sea diver wears a pressure suit and metal helmet — the deeper we dive the more danger there is but at those depths rests our fact-derived truths. As Gutkind notes, “the media remains skeptical of creative nonfiction — not only because of the potential to fudge but also because of the kind and depth of fact and truth that some creative nonfiction writers choose to tell.”¹⁴²

Several situations can provide even more challenge than usual in letting the facts drive the research and resulting narrative. One such instance is writing about topics which are intensely

¹³⁹ Lopate, *To Show and To Tell*, 79.

¹⁴⁰ K. Boo, “Difficult Journalism That’s Slap-Up Fun” in *Telling True Stories* eds. M. Kramer and W. Call (New York: Plume Books, 2007), 15.

¹⁴¹ Lee Gutkind, “The Creative Nonfiction Police?” in *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction* ed. Lee Gutkind (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005), xxiii.

¹⁴² Gutkind, “The Creative Nonfiction Police?”, xxv.

personal topics to the author. For me, I face such a challenge when I write about Theodore Roosevelt, a personal hero of mine since childhood.

There is a cliché that you should never meet your hero or heroes. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, highlighted this in a talk at the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School. When asked if he had any living heroes, Cook responded, "I have not had success with living heroes, and because, uh, I think it's better to pick a dead person and the reason is, no seriously, I'm serious about this, the reason is, dead people don't disappoint you."¹⁴³ Regardless if they are dead or alive, a writer digging into a story regarding his or her hero could be on a path to disappointment. That said, research and writing are not activities for the faint of heart. Perhaps the best approach was summed up by Lin-Manuel Miranda, when he tweeted, "Deify your heroes and they'll only disappoint you. Think of them as human, flawed, think of what you might do. Then be someone's hero too."¹⁴⁴

Rabb, using correspondence with George Saunders about Tobias Wolff, quotes Saunders as saying, "A work of art is something produced by a person, but is not that person — it is of her, but is not her. It's a reach, really — the artist is trying to inhabit, temporarily, a more compact, distilled, efficient, wittier, more true-seeing, precise version of herself..."¹⁴⁵ What if this reach or version of self is not part of a literary exploration but an effort to fit into a culture, identity or to construct a past? And what happens if, as a writer, you pull the loose thread that unravels your hero?

¹⁴³ Michael Potuck, "Tim Cook describes lessons from Steve Jobs, says 'focus on the dead' when it comes to heroes" October 11, 2017, accessed on April 26, 2019, <https://9to5mac.com/2017/10/11/tim-cook-oxford-interview/>

¹⁴⁴ Lin-Manuel Miranda. 9:07 AM - 5 Mar 2016. https://twitter.com/lin_manuel/status/706164129845932032?lang=en

¹⁴⁵ Margo Rabb, "Fallen Idols", July 25, 2013, accessed April 26, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/28/books/review/fallen-idols.html>

It took about a year of intermittent research to be prepared to write "Stout and Sharp". I approached this article by first providing some context for Roosevelt's understanding of the American West and how this impacted his desired costume when he left to be a cowboy. This was important to frame the obnoxiousness of the knife design and how it could live dual roles as wild costume element and functional plains-rancher tool. Several times it was necessary to balance the examination, looking at the bravado of a man who was a natural politician and thus likely to have motives in the stories told, but also not let this dissuade from actual feats of genuine, non-showman bravery and determination. How do you attempt to understand a man who went west to be a rancher in an outfit that seemed more like a theatre costume, but who also stabbed mountain lions with a knife to avoid possibly injuring a hunting dog with a rifle shot? It makes sorting out the truth very complex.

Relying on facts also helped in simply unpacking the complexity of the knife's design in "Stout and Sharp". Describing the knife itself was a challenge due to its various layered elements. There is the knife's design as a knife, then layered on that is the design and decoration, each element with some meaning to contribute to the mythology depicted on the knife and scabbard. It was a complicated unpacking of form, function, and meaning. Drafting the article was a fight as there were multiple approaches to cracking the code of the knife, but there always seemed to be stray elements left from some approaches and each draft felt piecemeal and stilted as the narrative always seemed to break. Unpacking the facts proved to be the break I needed as it allowed me to separate knife attributes into packages that could be explored individually. This deconstruction was critical to understanding the knife as a multi-dimensional artefact. Each element was pulled

from the whole, analyzed and explained, and then all pieces were re-constructed to check the final overall conclusions on the knife and its use.

TYPING

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for a writer is the capturing of words — the actual containment of the word on a 'page', real or digital, as it leaves the writer's mind. This is where a thought becomes tactile and continues its existence in a physical form.

There is an excellent John Wayne movie, *Hatari*, in which Wayne and his team adventure around Africa capturing animals for zoos. One person gets gored by a rhinoceros, another is almost lunched on by a crocodile, and several others are bruised, cut, sunburned, or beaten about in other ways. The lesson learned is that nothing worth capturing is captured easily. Words can be as difficult as a rhino or a crocodile. I suffer two significant issues in this area. First, my handwriting is awful. If I write slowly, I stand the chance of being able to read it later. If I write fast, the odds are not in my favor. A close relative once said my handwriting looked "like the scrawl of a schizophrenic kindergartner". They were not wrong. Second, I never learned to type. Keyboarding was not a required class in school and the teacher at my school was famous for her growling orders and lack of compassion for typographical errors. Almost every letter of this Context Statement (and of every article I have written), has been written with two digits: index finger and thumb. My style, if you can call it that, is a hybrid of the so-called 'hunt and peck' (although I seldom need to look at the keyboard these days to find my letters) and what I call the 'T-Rex': wherein only two fingers are used. Occasionally other fingers will strike a key, but it is rare. This somewhat slows my typing, which I think is a good thing as it allows me to labor both mentally

and physically over each word. That said, if the words are really coming, I often just keep typing and do not go back and correct mistakes until I read the sentence over.

In writing "Go with the Flow" I faced a new challenge. As the subject of the article is cafeteria and space design, many of the details were visual when dealing with fields like design and architecture, but became less visual when discussing methods for anthropology and observation. Initial attempts at paragraphs covering more visual elements resulted in text that was both long and too methodical, almost like play-by-play announcing of a sporting event. The paragraphs dealing with the less visual elements were sharp and concise. In typing between these elements I could even feel the difference as the visual elements over-paced my typing speed. This tactile element in writing was noticed by Hunter Thompson who used to retype the work of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald to experience how good writing felt on a keyboard.¹⁴⁶ As a solution, I used a lot of field vocabulary like 'servery' and 'scramble' for cafeteria design. This helped as once I had used it and described it, I could then use it again to reduce the words needed to address a visual element. From here, the transition to less visual topics like the application of anthropological techniques was less jarring, at least from a word count perspective, to the reader and the typing tempo felt more moderate and even. By the time I moved to detailing my findings based on my fieldwork of observing cafeteria patrons and extrapolating from these observations a short list of design suggestions, I had a smooth and accessible narrative typed at a moderate speed.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Nylen, *Guts: Combat, Hell-raising, Cancer, Business Start-ups, and Undying Love: One American Guy's Reckless, Lucky Life* (New York: Random House, 2009), 213.

CONSTRUCTION

When I first took note, while attending archeological field school, of the data that would form the basis for my article “The Rats of Fort Clark”, no one in my field school, faculty included, seemed to care or see any potential in the rat data. They saw little use, considering it was merely data on an event everyone knew was a part of the fort’s history. For me, it was something else. In the short story, “A Scandal in Bohemia”, Sherlock Holmes chides Dr. John Watson a bit when the good doctor fails to know the number of steps inside 221b Baker Street. Holmes says, “You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear.”¹⁴⁷ I felt I had taken notice of the importance of the data, something the others had not bothered to value.

Finding and sourcing the trends in the data gave me insights into the human history of the site that I did not want to lose. That data was recorded for a reason, perhaps not the reason I was using it for, but it existed for a purpose, and that purpose, at least for me, was a story. And telling that story required several perspectives in order to be fully understood. Dillard wrote that, “For fiction, poetry, or nonfiction, the more research you do, the more materials you will have to play with. You are writing for readers — a very educated bunch in this country. It is hard and interesting to tell them something they do not know. The more you read, the better you will know what they know.”¹⁴⁸ The more information I discovered, the more I had from which to form my story. And that story had power. As Boo wrote, “Narrative can convey vividly and potently the greater failings of government and industry, inequalities of class”.¹⁴⁹ One of the key elements was

¹⁴⁷ Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia,” in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), 6.

¹⁴⁸ A. Dillard, “Introduction: Notes for Young Writers?” in *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction* ed. Lee Gutkind (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005), xvi.

¹⁴⁹ Boo, “Difficult Journalism”, 14.

almost an entire tribe exterminated due to an invading disease brought by those seeking to exploit the area's resources.

Writing the article was a balancing act as no single element of the story was more significant than any other element. That said, there needed to be focus. While there are several journals covering this time period of American history, few have an editorial focus quite wide enough to explore the relationship between rats and fur traders in North Dakota. I drafted the manuscript and it was an epic, well over 15,000 words with equal focus on data charts, rat natural history, the fur trade, and psychology. It was a mess. I sent it nevertheless to a historical ecology journal that, surprisingly, liked it, but wanted the focus on the natural history of the rat on the Great Plains. This was not the story I wanted to tell. Therefore, I let it sit for 13 years.

I now had my first (I think) abandoned project. Harle gives scope to this issue in writing by quoting art historian Hans-Ulrich Obrist:

"There are many amazing unrealised projects out there, forgotten projects, misunderstood projects, lost projects, desk-drawer projects, realizable projects, poetic-utopian dream constructs, unrealizable projects, partially realized projects, censored projects and so on."¹⁵⁰

I just did not know what to do with it. At one point I considered making it a book, but that was to avoid having to pick a path and edit. My dilemma was close to what Obrist means when he says that, "Unfinished projects are expansive texts; they present open-ended ideas without material

¹⁵⁰ M. Harle, *Afterlives of Abandoned Work: Creative Debris in the Archive* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 4.

restraint, which by their very nature spill across cultural categories and notions of genre”.¹⁵¹ My text was just too damn big and I could not think my way out of it. I needed to take a lesson from Boo, in which she says, “You must choose, and choose aggressively” in order to deal with “all you can’t say in your stories.”¹⁵² My giant mass of narrative, footnotes, and charts was a testament that I did not know what to cut or what to choose. It was evidence of “an encounter between creativity and lived experience – between the everyday and the art of experiment.”¹⁵³

But, like some projects, it was not abandoned as much as its time had not yet come. Kois highlighted this as a strength of the abandoned novel, writing, “Sometimes a novel thought long dead can come back to life, brush the dirt off its pages, and shuffle back into an author’s career.”¹⁵⁴

About a year before I eventually published it, I found the article while clearing out a box of old research. While reading over what I had written, the focus became clearer to me. It did need to focus on the rats, but to see them as part of a broader historical episode and not simply an element of the natural history of the plains.

This focus fueled the editing and rewriting. I followed what in retrospect appears to be a modified version of Wolfe’s New Journalism. He notes that New Journalism was built from: “scene-by-scene construction”; “the use of copious dialogue”; “the careful notation of status details”; and a “point of view, in the Henry Jamesian sense of putting the reader inside the mind of someone other than the writer.”¹⁵⁵ To this end, I set scenes of the fort and village, the visitors and the

¹⁵¹ Harle, *Afterlives of Abandoned Work*, 4.

¹⁵² Boo, “Difficult Journalism”, 16.

¹⁵³ Harle, *Afterlives of Abandoned Work*, 180.

¹⁵⁴ D. Kois, “Why Do Writers Abandon Novels” March 4, 2011, access April 26, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/06/books/review/Kois-t.html>

¹⁵⁵ Tom Wolfe, “The Emotional Core of the Story” in *Telling True Stories* eds. M. Kramer and W. Call (New York: Plume Books, 2007), 150-151.

attitudes of those inhabiting the fort, especially Chardon. My story was the rats and each element to be included had to advance the story. For example, while seemingly boring, the biology of the rat is critical to understand later how a colony could consume over 1,000 human corpses in a few weeks. Chardon's attitude was important to understand his killing of the rats and his general dislike of life. For a fact, statement, or sub-story to survive getting cut, it had to advance the readers' understanding of the rats in the fort as evidenced by Chardon's journal entry. Guillermprieto said the same, noting that "Focusing on details somehow lashes me to the story, as if it were a mast. I find that as long as I stay focused on detail, detail, detail while I'm reporting, I advance the story."¹⁵⁶ I also find that when the details dry up, that avenue of research might be dead, but another field may be explored to continue the work. Using 'detail' as a measure is a sound test on if it is time to leverage other fields.

TRANSLATION

While many writers are used to operating between foreign languages (and my work has involved such effort), there is also a translation element in operating between specialty fields. Each field has its own language and vocabulary that, if the writer is to use insights from the field, they must become at least basically conversant in to avoid misusing the information. I have to write in the language of the field and need to learn complex specialist vocabulary to relate my findings — akin to what Harper notes when he says that Creative Writing must be written in the "indigenous languages" of the regions or countries involved.¹⁵⁷ This translation work is critical as any artefact

¹⁵⁶ Alma Guillermprieto, "Telling the Story, Telling the Truth" in *Telling True Stories* eds. M. Kramer and W. Call (New York: Plume Books, 2007), 157.

¹⁵⁷ Harper, *Making Up*, xi.

produced from the research process that does not involve translation will be faulty and this violates an important goal of creative nonfiction: regardless of subject, the core goal is always to do the story justice and leave behind a meaningful record that can advance our understanding of what is encountered. Boynton hits on the very mark when he discusses the work of journalist John McPhee. Boynton noted, "McPhee's influence on the New New Journalism can be seen in the catholic approach he takes toward subjects: anything — from geology and nuclear weapons to fishing and basketball — is fair game for the literary journalists as long as it is prodigiously researched and painstakingly reported."¹⁵⁸

While "Dusting the Past" presented a fair share of translation efforts, not only between languages but between fields, my work on "Jukker" is perhaps most illustrative of the challenges faced and the need to translate between fields. Traditionally, some type of translating is always needed in writing an article as each field has a vocabulary of its own and each journal has a style sheet and format of its own. In this regard, I am usually translating my findings into the language of the field and then into the dialect of the publishing journal.

In writing "Jukker", I found that starting my exploration of the term with the newspaper articles I read helped me establish a pace of detail and translation that built up until I was delving deeply in to other languages. Tracking meaning from African languages into Creole involved translating, but the biggest challenge was taking what I found and translating that into the highly specialized language of linguistics. This effort occurred on two fronts as I needed to use the correct nomenclature for the various words (agent noun, instrument noun, morphotactic, etc.) but also

¹⁵⁸ Robert S. Boynton, *The New New Journalism* (New York: Vintage, 2005) xvi.

correctly use the signs and symbols that record how a word is pronounced (some relevant words appeared as *čuk-am* and *ǰkə* in the text).

READING ALOUD

As I write an article manuscript, I will not proceed to the next paragraph unless I am completely happy with the previous paragraph. If that takes rewriting it a dozen times, so be it. If that means walking away from the article and not working on it for several years, fine by me. Joan Didion resonates with me. For her, the research and the writing are a craft, a tactile engagement of creating something out of a base set of material. Didion gives this context, saying “Writing nonfiction is more like sculpture, a matter of shaping the research into the finished thing. Novels are like paintings, specifically watercolors. Every stroke you put down you have to go with. Of course, you can rewrite, but the original strokes are still there in the texture of the thing.”¹⁵⁹

Sculpting paragraphs is challenging on several fronts. First, I am trying to convey details, insights, and meanings. Second, I am grappling with word choice. Third, I am trying to shoehorn my insights and words into the proper grammar. While this is probably not the ideal place to admit it, I am a troubled grammarian. My grade school did not really teach it. Grammar was an afterthought relegated to extra credit in English class if anyone cared for the points. This was not all the school’s fault. For me, the written word and the spoken word must sound the same and have to follow a certain melody. The written paragraphs must sound a particular way — they must sound right. As I type my articles, I am usually saying the words aloud. Do the words sounds good together? Is one hitting a bad or false note? Does the melody contribute to understanding the

¹⁵⁹ Hilton Als, “Joan Didion, The Art of Nonfiction No. 1,” *The Paris Review* 48, no. 176 (2006).

information? Is it in the way? Interestingly, my approach to the sound of written words leads to my most common typographical error: homophones. The bane of my existence is the homophone. As I am typing, I am typing to fill an auditory gap and when it sounds the same, I am often too wrapped up in the next dozen words to note if I have chosen the correct their or there or stare or stair. By the time I have rewritten a paragraph a dozen times there may still be a homophone error because the paragraph sounds perfect, it is just typed poorly. Also, given my dodgy education in grammar, I tend to bend grammar to my own ends, using commas, semi-colons, and dashes (long and short) if they provide the pauses I hear as being necessary. Stephen King addresses the role of grammar and the nature of good writing and how writing is about language and that does not always mean grammatical perfectionism. King writes, "Language does not always have to wear a tie and lace-up shoes. The object of fiction isn't grammatical correctness but to make the reader welcome and then tell a story . . . to make him/her forget, whenever possible, that he/she is reading a story at all."¹⁶⁰

I see this reading aloud as a form of proofreading and it is not as strange as it sounds. Several writers practice it, albeit each in slightly different ways. Susan Orlean tweeted that, "I always, ALWAYS, read my work out loud as I'm writing. It's the single best tool for self-editing."¹⁶¹ And much like my approach, Orlean does so out of appreciation for the auditory value of the written word: "Read your stories out loud so you can *hear* how you tell stories."¹⁶²

David Sedaris takes the process to some extremes, reading his work dozens of times in front of hundreds of people before he is satisfied the words are having the desired impact for his

¹⁶⁰ Stephen King, *On Writing* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 128.

¹⁶¹ Susan Orlean, @susanorlean 10:39 AM - Jun 8, 2012

¹⁶² Susan Orlean, "On Voice" in *Telling True Stories* eds. M. Kramer and W. Call (New York: Plume Books, 2007), 158.

audience. Clearly, his approach is different as much of his work is performance based while Orlean and others like her are not. Sedaris notes that while a writer will miss errors in proofreading, “you pretty much always catch it when you’re reading out loud.”¹⁶³

Finding errors aside, the importance for me is the melody of the words and how they might sound to my readers. Kiefer Lee notes the value of this aloud approach in building reader experience, noting that doing so “helps us sound like people” and “makes us more empathetic.”¹⁶⁴ Non-melodious constructs are barriers to our readers and form ready excuses for our work to be laid aside while another’s is taken up.

In writing “Edges of the Empire”, I had to lay quite a bit of foundational work before I could dive into the meat of the novel and the appearances of the weapons. Reading what I had typed aloud helped me avoid unneeded repetition and caught several instances of using the same word in a sentence or in consecutive sentences. It also helped me make a compelling case for the history and cultural significance of the weapons outside the novel, but do so as succinctly as possible so as to not lose track of the symbolism of the weapons in the story. Reading the article aloud also highlighted the need to provide context from related works, like the short story “Shooting an Elephant”, to provide further examples of the same symbolism. I also chose to cast a wider net, finding items like Orwell’s collection of dahs from his days as a police officer and the appearance of sword-related symbolism in other works. Each instance when the language appeared stilted or did not transition as expected meant I was missing a transitional detail.

¹⁶³ K. Hohenadel, “Say It Out Loud: How David Sedaris Makes His Writing Better”, April 15, 2013, accessed April 26, 2019,

<https://www.fastcompany.com/1682768/say-it-out-loud-how-david-sedaris-makes-his-writing-better>

¹⁶⁴ K. Kiefer Lee, “To Write Like A Human, Read Your Work Out Loud.” Aug 1, 2012, accessed April 26, 2019,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/katelee/2012/08/01/to-write-like-a-human-read-your-work-out-loud/#529393db4771>

PROOFREADING

I am an impatient proofreader. And perhaps even a failed proofreader. As I write an article, I fight with each paragraph until it reads how I want it to read and then I am done with it. In this process, I write and rewrite, questioning every word and in doing so find the typos and errors in logic and prose. Once I write something, I just cannot bring myself to read the work again after it is all drafted. John Dos Passos comes to mind here, especially when he wrote, "If there is a special Hell for writers it would be in the forced contemplation of their own works, with all the misconceptions, the omissions, the failures that any finished work of art implies."¹⁶⁵

I think I am also afraid of reading my article again at the end because I will find things to re-write, regardless if it is needed or not. That is why I self-limit. If I can be satisfied with the paragraph, then I move on and never look back. Further, since I have written every word, there is a low chance that I will see all the errors as I'm likely to just read over it. Mark Twain captures this very real danger, writing in a letter:

"And then there is that other thing: when you think you are reading proof, whereas you are merely reading your own mind; your statement of the thing is full of holes & vacancies but you don't know it, because you are filling them from your mind as you go along. Sometimes -- but not often enough -- the printer's proof-reader saves you -- & offends you -- with this cold sign in the margin: (?) & you search the passage & find that the

¹⁶⁵ John Dos Passos, "Looking Back on 'U.S.A.'" *New York Times*, October 25 1959.

insulter is right -- it doesn't say what you thought it did: the gas-fixtures are there, but you didn't light the jets."¹⁶⁶

Writing this Context Statement has been intensely rewarding but it has also tested my usual writing practice. Not only did I have to read each article covered several times over, I also had to review previous versions if I submitted it to several publications. And this was just the start. I cannot count the number of times I have re-read and re-worked the Context Statement itself. While not my usual practice, I have noticed in writing articles after starting work on this statement that I am a better proofreader than I was before.

In writing the article that recorded the Bloomfield Throwing Knife, I followed the story as I uncovered it, beginning with the phone pole in Bloomfield, Nebraska and peeling back the layers of meaning. Each source, such as design or insight from the police officer, was an informant, giving me a detail I needed to complete the story of the artefact. One item I found missing when proofreading the first draft was the lack of a context in actual martial arts history. I went back and did more research on the use of throwing weapons in Japan in order to provide a historical and functional framework for the material that was being exploited by the martial arts movies. This made the piece feel well-rounded and inclusive of the real, exploited, and fabricated worlds that formed the identity of this artefact. That said, as I added each element to the narrative and especially after addressing concerns of the journal editor, I had to proofread this article after each addition to make sure my narrative was smooth, transitions were clear, and terms were defined

¹⁶⁶ Letter to Sir Walter Bessant, 22 February 1898. Directory of Mark Twain's maxims, quotations, and various opinions, accessed April 26, 2019, <http://www.twainquotes.com/Proofreaders.html>

where appropriate. While some of these issues were handled by reading aloud, others were addressed through standard proofreading and the article benefited greatly from it.

CONCLUSION

Regardless if it is the bricoleur making use of what is available or the bowerbird constructing a nest of what it needs and likes, each requires a method and practice of construction. Although I am not producing the traditional artefacts of Creative Writing, such as poems, novels, and long-form nonfiction, my work is an artefact of many of the same processes and construction methods. In producing my articles, I work through concepts familiar to all writers. In fact, without the tools and skills of Creative Writing, I could not take the raw research material I have gathered and turn that into anything useful or accessible. The linkage between research philosophy and artefact production is critical in establishing my approach as an avenue to produce research articles.

CHAPTER 4: PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATION

WHY PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATION?

Harper writes that, “Most define academic success in the terms of material outputs and most define job performance by these very same terms.”¹⁶⁷ Clearly, publication is nothing new to creative writers, either of fiction or of nonfiction. Some, like Mark Twain, were so driven for their words to be read that they self-published. While I felt a need to be read, I also had a deep sense of needing my work to be accepted and published by those who were experts in the fields I leveraged.

For my work, publication in peer-reviewed journals addresses a critical issue as it resolves any possible accusation of dilettantism in the polymathic approach as it is a method by which the writer can know if their work has “passed a certain quality control that is exerted within each field by the competition.”¹⁶⁸

A SUGGESTION ON HOW TO READ THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will explore the processes of getting the submitted Public Works published. I analyze my efforts in placing articles with journals and examine the articles not in the order of publication but rather from the challenges each one presented in the process of publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

¹⁶⁷ Harper, *Making Up*, 160.

¹⁶⁸ Carr, “The Last Days of the Polymath”.

GETTING STARTED

When I decided to publish “Dusting the Past” (2002), I was interning in a state law enforcement agency. This and my use of forensic techniques in researching the article led me toward forensic science publications and focused on the premier fingerprint journal: the *Journal of Forensic Identification*.

The submission process was somewhat antiquated as manuscripts and illustrations had to be mailed to the editor in paper form and saved to a CD. I forget how many weeks I waited, but one day an envelope with a gold embossed fingerprint in the upper corner arrived. Cutting open the envelope from the editor was terrifying. The words of acceptance resolved that terror immediately. As previously explained, I tied four fields together to create a narrative that was scientifically meaningful, with the manuscript receiving little more than a few journal style edits that were handled by the editor.

Although this was one of my first peer-reviewed articles, it has also been one of my most impactful publications. The leading bibliography curated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), referenced my article as a critical source for the use of fingerprints in archaeology: “References such as Arp (2002), Ryder (1963), or Schmidt, et al. (1996) revealing connections between fingerprints and the archaeological record.”¹⁶⁹ This article also went on to lay the groundwork for Swedish researchers exploring the use of fingerprints as an avenue of inquiry into archaeology.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Michael J. Hochrein, *A Bibliography Related to Crime Scene Interpretation with Emphases in Geotaphonomic and Forensic Archaeological Field Techniques* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Print Shop, 17th Edition, 2015), 1157.

¹⁷⁰ Mikael Jägerbrand,, Christel Lindholm, and Karl-Erik Sjöquist, “Fingeravtryck på gropkeramik från Siretorp i Blekinge och Gullrum på Gotland” *Fornvännen: Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research*, Vol. 101 (2006), 9-17.

SYNERGIES

There are literally thousands of peer-reviewed, academic journals out there, in digital and traditional hardcopy (or both). Despite the use of several fields in my work, the result can be an article that will be of interest only to a hyper-specialty readership, even more so than is usual in academic research. "Jukker" (2010) presented challenges throughout its research, writing, and publication. This article is perhaps the most specialized that I have written given its focus on nuanced areas of linguistic construction and word origins. With this in mind, I knew from the outset of my research that this article would have few avenues of publication, so unlike previous efforts, I searched for a journal before I wrote the article. I found the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* and it looked perfect, especially since it had an article category for shorter pieces exploring smaller topics.

Using its style guide and short note format as the template along which I formed my narrative provided a concise and approachable format. I moved on from discovering the term jukker and into an examination of the weapon, as its design was critical to understanding the verb and specificity of the noun. Verb origins, spelling, noun formation and implications rounded out the article. I submitted the article to the *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* and it was accepted with some minor source changes.

When I wrote "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses" (2014), I faced a similar situation: an article leveraging multiple disciplines but probably of interest to only a small subset of readers, even in a specialty journal. Given the scope of the article, I focused on researching journals involving trademark issues and intellectual property. One of the first I found, the *Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Practice* resonated with me as it published both lengthy academic

discourses on property law, but also sought insights from the field where legal philosophy met real world behavior. The article was accepted with no edits.

Similarly, finding a journal with readership that was likely to be interested in the topic was key in placing "Go with the Flow" (2015). Given this article was focused on a more participatory field, design, I looked for peer-review publications in food service and food service architecture. I submitted the paper to the *Journal of Food Service Business Research* and it was accepted.

As much as I have had success with some articles in hyper-focused journals, sometimes finding such journals, despite the thousands that exist, can be challenging. In submitting the "Rats at Fort Clark" (2016) for publication, I focused on journals of the fur trade period and there are not many. The period is usually covered in other journals as part of a larger historical focus. The article found a home in its first submission. Peer-review and some help from the editor helped focus the piece more, mostly by tightening structure and cutting out some unnecessary details. In some areas I did over-edit, which resulted in some questions from the editor and the needs for reinstatement of some details. Also, given the nature of the field, the reviewers wanted to see certain references cited as they represented the accepted core of literature on an element of the story. I am proud of the final version, as I am all of my articles, although this article is intensely sad. The amount of human suffering it records is daunting and something I probably will avoid if at all possible in the future.

Despite a having a focused subject matter, I tried placing "Edges of the Empire" (2016) in broader focused journals believing that its subject, a novel by George Orwell, would qualify for wider appeal. Submitting the article proved me quite wrong. I submitted to *English Studies*. Knowing the article was perhaps a bit outside the normal scope of the journal, I sent a copy to an

editor who forwarded it to the main office for review, only to receive the standard rejection email and the well-worded yet somewhat self-important line:

“We also ask your understanding for the fact that we cannot enter into a detailed correspondence about the present decision. English Studies is in the fortunate position to receive a great many submissions from across the globe for review, and to correspond in detail about our reviewers' verdicts would overburden the small editorial staff we work with.”¹⁷¹

It really is not worded badly, but few words in a rejection email ever land well in the ears of the dismissed. I decided my best bet rested in a journal that regularly published Orwell items and that is how I came across the newly founded *Orwell Journal*. The editor said it was shorter than other articles, but liked it and accepted it with a few minor changes and some formatting to fit the journal style guide.

TROUBLE FINDING A JOURNAL

While I had success with some other journals, some articles were very difficult to place. Part of the issue rested in the use of multiple fields. Which one did I use to find journals? I discovered few journals that were interested in multi-field approaches. This led to repeated submissions and, of course, each new journal approached meant a re-write on format and citation style even before being reviewed. Each journal follows its own style guide. Even journals following,

¹⁷¹ English Studies Editorial office, email from: FdL es@let.ru.nl, Jun 14, 2016, 5:16 AM

say the University of Chicago, follow different versions of it. The citation style also influences the writing of the article. Endnotes or footnotes are a blessing as they are unobtrusive. Parenthetical references are a nightmare as they are clunky and break the flow of carefully constructed text. To appreciate the text, the reader needs to learn to skip the parentheticals, which is easier said than done.

Trying to place "An Eye for an Eye" (2013), presented multi-field challenges. Was this a story of a public building, building design, legal history, Babylonian culture, Nebraska, or something else? The real answer was it was all of those things.

I tried a Nebraska history journal, but they felt the topic was too specialized. Next, I approached a legal journal that sometimes published history articles but they felt it was not practice-focused enough. Then I expanded my perspective and approached an architectural history journal, but was rejected as too much of the article focused on text analysis and not architecture, which I found to be an interesting assessment given that all the elements, text and statuary, were part of the Capitol architecture. Finally, I found the *Sculpture Journal*. The editor loved the piece and accepted with a few minor changes and some technical assistance with the illustrations.

Unlike some other articles I had published, I then received a list of questions and suggested changes from the journal layout editor. The actual editor of the journal was surprised and had never had something like this happen, but the layout editor was new to the publication and may have been simply a bit overzealous. I addressed many of the issues, which involved some simple repetition of material to remind the reader of a fact or identity, but also had to locate some

additional visual elements to clarify points of the text that the layout editor felt were somewhat opaque.

"Forced Perspectives" (2014) was a similar experience to 'An Eye for an Eye". After completing the article manuscript, I researched criminal justice and police procedure journals. I first approached *Police Quarterly*, mostly because it was the first journal I found on the internet that seemed to fit my subject matter. The article was rejected because it was too short and was not presented in an empirical reporting format. Interestingly, a year or so later I served as a peer-reviewer for *Police Quarterly*. Next, I tried *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*. It was rejected again as it was too brief and the editors did not seem to understand anthropological interviews as a data collection technique. By this time, I was fairly tired of the article although it only took about four months to find it a home. Hunting for a publisher was a lot of work and no one seemed to care. I also felt it was being rejected for silly reasons that had little to do with the substance of the argument. Surely it is possible to make a cogent argument in 3,200 words instead of 10,000? In a final effort, I sent the article to *Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*. The editors liked the piece and only requested I expand my examination of racial profiling and include some examples from Europe as the journal was published in the United Kingdom. This was easily done and the article was accepted.

Placing the "Bloomfield Throwing Knife" (2016) provided more of a challenge than the above articles combined as it studied what some might call a piece of junk and covered martial arts history, fan labor, design, and material culture. For design journals it was not theoretical or process focused enough. A material culture journal said it was not aligned with any significant debates in the field. A journal in Japanese studies thought it was not focused on Japan enough.

With those avenues closed, I turned to military and weapons publications, approaching *Arms and Armour*, a journal published by the Royal Armouries. The reviewers loved it, but wanted to see a bit more context placed on the identity of 'ninjas' in Japanese martial culture history material, for which they suggested a source. Publication was delayed briefly due to change in editorial staff.

Some trouble finding a journal is self-imposed. For example, by the time I had written "Stout and Sharp" (2014), I had published two articles with the *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal*. While it is an excellent publication, I was also wanting to diversify my publications list, so I searched for journals covering the history of the Great Plains. Many were highly nuanced, focusing on ecology or larger-scale regional histories. I kept searching, but with similar results. Finally, during my last search before I was going to submit it to *TRAJ*, I found *Heritage of the Great Plains*, a small, peer-reviewed journal produced by the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University. The article seemed like a perfect fit and was accepted without changes.

CONCLUSION

The articles I produced, and which accompany this Context Statement, were similar to those produced by specialist academic research, so peer review in academic journals was a measure of acceptance for me. My need to be accepted by those I saw as experts in the fields I engaged in limited me to these journals. One could argue that as I have taken a different approach to producing the research, I could also take a less establishment-focused track to publishing research. While that may be an option for the future, I saw publication in peer-reviewed journals as being a critical test as to whether my work product was of sufficient quality and interest to share journal pages with academic content produced by more traditional research efforts.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This Context Statement and the 10 Public Works submitted with it evidence that while practicing as an academically stateless researcher over a more than 14-year period I created a new path to producing peer-reviewed research. I worked across and through different disciplines, publishing in specialist journals while not being a specialist researcher. I united several fields in each inquiry, producing rich, detailed, and multi-faceted stories of subjects I found personally interesting. To achieve this, I used tools and practices from Creative Writing, a field with a rich tradition in non-specialist research. My goal is not to say that specialization is not needed. Rather, I seek to provide an alternate path to producing publishable research at a time when such innovative approaches are seen as the solution to the increasingly complex problems of the world.

Leveraging Fields

I consider myself closely aligned with the deep generalist-polymath tradition and the philosophy of transdisciplinary research. Considering my use of tools and elements from Creative Writing, I see a more practical synergy with the Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach to research and production from that field. Core to the concept of Bricoleur-Bowerbird is the writer taking what they need from wherever they can find it. This practice is also the basis for Creative Writing's research tradition as the practice cuts across all artefacts of the field, including poems, novels, short fiction, plays, and creative nonfiction.

I felt that it was absolutely necessary to engage as many fields as possible as I researched an article. Doing otherwise seemed foolish to me as I could be missing an item critical to my

narrative. In reviewing the Public Works submitted with this Context Statement, I cannot imagine how each article would have turned out if a field of inquiry was deleted. What would the "Bloomfield Throwing Knife" have been without discussing "mall ninjas" and martial arts movie fans? Would "Go with the Flow" have as much impact if cost-saving implications of design improvements were not considered? Fields ranging from forensic science to typesetting analysis were used to create meaningful and complete narratives of the topics I investigated.

Using multiple fields is what differentiates my work from that of the specialized academic. For me, to do otherwise would be like reading a story with random pages removed or watching a movie with random minutes deleted. I am not a specialist in any of the fields leveraged in these articles. Using Webb and Brien's Bricoleur-Bowerbird Approach allows me to operate across these disciplines, pulling in what is needed from wherever it can be found.

Using Creative Writing Elements

While my work has a strong synergy with Creative Writing because of Bricoleur-Bowerbird, that is not my only connection with the field. In several ways, my work uses tools and elements from Creative Writing to create the academic articles I publish. Each of the Public Works submitted with this Context Statement evidence an element of Creative Writing. These elements include: plot; style; motif; character; conflict; action; narration; setting; scene; and point of view. Each Public Work evidences how the tools traditionally used to craft works such as novels and poems, can now can now be seen as tools useful in creating research articles.

Writing, regardless if it is a novel or a research article, requires a method and practice of construction. My work produces a non-traditional artefact for Creative Writing, but uses concepts

familiar to all writers. Without Creative Writing methods, I could not bring my research together into a meaningful and accessible narrative.

Publishing

My work leverages Creative Writing methods to produce contributions to peer-reviewed journals outside of the field. I feel a need to have the validity of my work tested and, in my mind, there is no better test than publication in peer-reviewed journals.

If I produced artefacts that were more traditional to Creative Writing, like a novel or play, my feelings on publication avenue would be different. However, I see myself as an academic researcher and the test of such research is peer-review. Stated another way, I needed to see if my work was good enough to share journal pages with articles produced by specialized research efforts. With 10 peer-reviewed articles submitted with this Context Statement and another 10 published peer-reviewed articles to my name, I have a proven record of accomplishment that my process produces academic research that is valued by the academic community.

Final Thoughts

My path has always been alternative. While successful as an academically stateless researcher, my goal is not to disprove the need for traditional specialization, but rather to establish an alternate path to producing publishable research. T.E. Lawrence once wrote:

“All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible.”¹⁷²

With this Context Statement and associated Public Works I have acted my “dream with open eyes” by taking research, as it has always existed in Creative Writing, along with the tools of the field and used it all to produce peer-reviewed articles instead of a novel, poem, or play. In doing so, I have expanded the Bricoleur-Bowerbird methodology by showing that an academic article is a potential artefact of the Creative Writing process. These artefacts have been tested by appearing in peer-reviewed publications.

Just as I wished to subject my work to the rigour of publication in peer-reviewed journals, I also felt the need to subject my work and methods to review through a PhD program. This PhD by Public Works closes the loop in presenting my published work as a collective effort to provide an alternative approach to academic research at a time when boundaries and dogma are being challenged to advance our understanding of an ever-complicating world.

¹⁷² Lawrence, T. E. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Wordsworth Editions, 1997): p. 7.

APPENDIX A: ALL PUBLISHED WORK

BOOKS

1. *Breeze of the Gods: The Mythology, History, and Complications of Perfume in Ancient Greece*. Numen Books, December 2014

PEER-REVIEWED

1. "An Observed Instance of Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) Predation on a Chicken in an Urban Environment". *Nebraska Bird Review*, March 2019.
2. "Talk the Walk: Enhance Data Collection During Process Walks by Asking the Right Questions". *Six Sigma Forum Magazine* Vol. 17, No. 2 (February 2018), pgs. 23-26.
3. "'Woman Scans Skylight for Finger Prints': The Story of Omaha Police Fingerprint Expert Emily Byram". *Nebraska History* Vol. 98, Issue 04 (Winter 2017), pgs. 189-198.
4. "The Real Identities of Tablet JCS 17, 021 Nebraska". *Cuneiform Digital Library Notes* 2016:2.
5. "The Edges of the Empire: The Symbolism of Bladed Weapons in Orwell's *Burmese Days*". *George Orwell Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 107-115.
6. "The Bloomfield Throwing Knife: Analyzing an Improvised Shuriken to Appreciate the Derived Artifact". *Arms & Armour: Journal of the Royal Armouries* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2016), pgs. 62-69.
7. "The Rats at Fort Clark". *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal* Vol. 10 (2016), pgs. 37-47.
8. "An Ur III Tablet in the Archives and Special Collections of the University of Nebraska Lincoln Libraries". *Cuneiform Digital Library Notes* 2015:15.
9. "Go With the Flow: Using Anthropology to Expedite the Flow of the Classic Scramble Cafeteria". *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* Vol. 18, No. 2, pgs. 182-187.
10. "Foundationalism as the Basis of Ethics: Moral Agreement in a Pluralistic World". *Ethics & Medics: A Commentary of the National Catholic Bioethics Center on Health Care and the Life Sciences* May 2015, Vol. 40, No. 5, pgs. 1-2.
11. "Alligators, Crocodiles, and Cutlasses: A Case of Trademark Infringement from Guyana". *Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Practice* Vol. 9, No. 12 (December 2014), pgs. 999-1001.

12. "Forced Perspective: Police Officers' Personal Opinions and Racial Data Collection in Nebraska". *Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles* Vol. 87, No. 3, 2014, pgs. 195-200.
13. "'Stout and Sharp': Theodore Roosevelt's Tiffany-made hunting-knife". *Heritage of the Great Plains* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Winter 2014), pgs. 22-35.
14. "Creating a Culture of Engagement for 21st Century Medicine" With Alan Uden and George Hansen, M.D., FAAFP. *Group Practice Journal*/Vol. 62, No. 10, Nov/Dec 2013, pgs. 8-12.
15. "'An Eye for an Eye': Examining a Cuneiform Inscription on the Nebraska State Capitol". *Sculpture Journal*/Vol. 22.1 (2013), pgs. 139-143.
16. "An 'Unknown Weapon' of Ancient Egypt: Identifying a Mystery Weapon from the Work of Sir Richard Francis Burton". *The Ostrakon* Vol. 22, Fall 2011, pgs. 17-23.
17. "Holmes's Loaded Hunting-crop". *The Baker Street Journal*/Winter 2010 Vol. 60, No. 4, pgs. 38-42.
18. "Jukker: A brief note on an instrument noun in Guyanese Creole used to denote a specific improvised weapon". *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* Vol. 25:2 (2010) pgs. 345-349.
19. "The Old Precinct House is New Again: The Use of Neighborhood Substations in Lincoln, Nebraska" With Thomas Casady. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* Vol. 78, No. 12 (December 2009), pgs. 12-16.
20. "'An institutional ability to evaluate our own programs': The Concept of Legislative Oversight and the History of Performance Auditing in Nebraska, 1974-2009". *Journal of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries* Fall 2009, Vol. 15, No. 2, pgs. 8-14.
21. "The Sharp Case: The First Use of Palm Prints for Criminal Identification in Nebraska". *Nebraska Chapter – International Association for Identification Newsletter* May 2008, pgs. 10-15.
22. "The Face behind the Knife: A Study of the James Bowie Portrait Purchased by the Texas Historical Commission and the State Preservation Board". *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* January 2006, Vol. CIX, No. 3, pages 302-317.
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28. "Signs of the Times: The University of Nebraska Cuneiform Tablets". *Museum Notes* February 2001, No. 108.
29. "Here Comes the President! TR and His 1903 Lincoln, Nebraska Visit". *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* May 2000, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, pages 6-9.

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1. "The Fist of Odysseus: Possible Early Signs of an Unarmed Combat System in Ancient Greece." With Tom Winter, PhD. *Ancient Warfare Magazine* June/July 2018, Vol. XII, No. 1, pgs. 9-11
2. "That Autograph on My Wall: A Huddle with Jim Skow". *Husker Happenings: Letterwinner Newsletter* UNL Athletic Department, Nov. 2016
3. "Dart or Arrow? 20th Century Projectile Point Differentiation Studies and the Search for Weapons System Design Innovation on the Great Plains". *Central States Archaeological Journal* July 2016, Vol. 63, No. 3, pgs. 150-153.
4. "Animal Activity and the Crime Scene". *POLICE: The Law Enforcement Magazine* May 2016, Vol. 40, No. 5, pgs. 30-34.
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6. "Interviewing: The Why and How of Building Rapport". *The Nebraska Trooper* Spring 2014, pgs. 12-14.

7. "‘Everything was being wrecked by air-impotence’: Air Power as a Force Multiplier during the Last Days of the Arab Revolt, September 1918". *WW1 Aero: The Journal of The Early Aeroplane* No. 219, May 2014, pgs. 34-39.
8. "The Sharp Case: The First Use of Palm Prints for Criminal Identification in Nebraska". *The Nebraska Trooper* Spring 2010, pgs. 35-37.
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10. "Effective Written Reports". *LAW and ORDER* April 2007, Vol. 55, No. 4, pages 100-102.
11. "What Does It Mean To Be A Protectee?: Explaining Executive Protection to the New Officeholder". *The Nebraska Trooper* Spring 2004, Vol. 22, Ed. 1, pages 51-56.
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2. Review of *Advertising and Anthropology: Ethnographic Practice and Cultural Perspectives* by Malefyt and Morais. *Anthropological Notebooks: Official Publication of the Slovene Anthropological Society* XIX, No. 3 (2013) pgs. 151-152.
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1. Haiku. *Haiku Journal*, No. 37, pg. 17.

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1. *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*
 - 2016 and 2018
2. *Police Quarterly*
 - 2014

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