

Anthropology, activism and local environmental knowledge (Seminar)

Various Speakers

14 March 2023

This panel discussion explores ways that anthropology might inform, foster, and support climate & environmental activism through connection to local knowledge, or TEK (traditional ecological knowledge), with a focus on England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Europe in general. The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) 2022 report recognizes Indigenous alternatives to Western models as exemplary curation of biodiversity. How can anthropology support this theoretically and practically through landscape, relationality, storytelling, spirit, and connection? What would be equivalent to Indigenous TEK? How can this be instrumental in enhancing wider community connections to landscape, riverscape, skyscape?

Panel includes:

- Raj Puri (Kent) environmental anthropologist and ethnobotanist;
- Paul Powlesland, lawyer, rights of nature activist, Friend of the River Roding;
- Pauline von Hellermann (Goldsmiths) regenerative anthropology, the Commons.
- Richard Jones (Leicester) medieval historian, Old English placenames as repository of knowledge about flood control;
- Magda Buchczyk (CARMAH Berlin) material culture, museums, history and memory

Facilitators: Camilla Power, Helen Cornish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mYfqa0q6yU>

Welcome tonight everybody and really glad to see everybody here and thank you for joining on Zoom. This is a rather special evening because we've never really tried this before with a panel of speakers who we're yeah, we're going we're going to be introducing help Paul palsland rajpuri Helen Cornish if you come here is my co-facilitator tonight, and I'm going to ask Helen to introduce our first contributor. Thank you. Good.

Thank you Camilla. Yeah, welcome everybody. It's so nice to be here and it's so nice to be taking part. So thank you for setting up this really interesting collaborative event. And I'm really looking forward to the conversations and all about participants. So the first speaker is Halloween from goldsmiths University who is and environmental.

Anthropologist, and I worked on politically ecology and a lot of her research recently has been doing to do with the cultural history of palm oil but today Paulina. I think

you're going to give us a general introduction to some of the themes that we might want to think about today so over to you. Thank you.

So, thank you so much Camila for facilitating this it's really great Helen and you and I have been talking about this sort of Subject about how to bring in to talk to think starting to think of it more about local environmental knowledge here in the UK, but you have now put this on the map and we're finally actually having an event about it, which is great. So yes, I wanted to kick off by really starting to talk about as you can see from my title. What role can anthropology play in bringing marginalized knowledge just into regenerative Futures.

I I was putting together the title for this this morning and realized it sounds very much like an essay question, but it's I thought that would actually work quite well because I'm approach him taking it's sort of really an Open start to think this through but I'm very open to everyone contributing and I haven't got a programmatic view of anything at all. I'm just sort of putting in a few things. I've been thinking about. Um, and yeah before I start I quickly wanted to say something about my title page here the illustration of Schumacher's smallest beautiful.

I put it on here because it was published 50 years ago, and I'm trying to use 2023 as a year to kind of bring it in whenever it makes sense. And I think today that it does make sense to mention it but I also particularly like the cover of this version I have here of as you can see the new world is almost born I do to do like this very much as a cover. So I thought but since the tone for this So yeah, so I will in the time I have and I will try to stick to it just talk about three things where we are at in now and in time and then how other older forms of marginalized knowledge can help and then thirdly the role anthropology can play in this.

So in terms of where we're at, we've all been talking about it and where I don't really need to say it, but we are.

In a time of holy crisis not just climate and biodiversity but also spiraling inequality Health Energy and of course democracy as well and it's there.

It's it's not just that we are living through this time, which we all know that also what I've been noticing is that we are increasingly recognizing more and more of us what is really behind this which is basically that it's the result of the kind of dominant mode of how we've been living living or what we've been doing the last 300 years or so. I am now you can call this colonialism capitalism or both together or I also very much like Nancy Fraser's cannibal capitalism as a comprehensive overall term But for the purpose of today, I also think it's quite useful to think of it maybe just in terms of or more broadly as modernity because it's of course, it's capitalism and extractivism, but also bureaucracy and lightning and Technology. It's a sort of wider phenomenon and most of all ways of thinking And all of this is really being called into question now and I was really struck the other day on within two days. I listened to two podcasts one was outrage and optimism with Christiana figaris talking to Johann rockstrom where they were talking about the problems of silos thinking of Enlightenment thinking and how Arts and Sciences have been separated for so long in a very very matter of fact

way and then on the same day I listen to Accidental Gods which by the way also really recommend us a really great podcast to think things through or how to do things differently. She was doing an interview with poor ride essay about Excel sheets thinking where he was talking about this as a major problem today, and then also actually my parents of all people on the same day or the day after called me to say they've just been to talk by and all the right zika where he was talking about how really the massive amount of damage that the enlight Said caused and I was May. I am very very aware that all this is of course is very Niche and more less coming from the same quarters and that I am and myself very receptive to all this nevertheless.

I do think there is a wider change that these sort of things were not talked about so much before and I do think there is there is a bit of a shift and that's also in things like the huge popularity of for example grading Sweetgrass by Robin William or Jason hickles less is more and also I kind of overall recognition that we do need to rethink how we've been thinking about nature culture and I've noticed this very much when it's one of the lectures I give in my environmental anthropology module and realize I had to teach a very differently this year just because it wasn't something that was sort of new and I had to talk people through we were all almost already on the same page in terms of recognizing that the kind of division of nature culture doesn't really work anymore and it's and it's been questioned them. There's so many different ways of thinking about it.

So I do feel all this is changing and of course there is also so much kind of transition underway already with all the permaculture projects where generative farming transition towns. And then of course don't add economics or their size one planet living Etc. There's so many different ways projects that are starting and also so many individuals Who are themselves in different ways organically choosing? life and part of this what is very very important in all this of course is that we really need to Start imagining like we cannot really get to a different future if we can't really imagine that and so that's something I've become really interested in. I didn't used to be but I am now I'm interested in the for example the idea of the symbiosene a term. That was by the philosopher Glenn Albrecht that after the anthropocene didn't be a scene of of living together nature culture symbiosis.

Also, of course solar Punk very much and the sort of really Innovative exciting eco-socialists thinking going and positive thinking going into that and more widely science fiction. I'm I've never used to be now. I really like it as a genre and I yeah, I read quite a lot now, but Well, and but overall we just really need a sort of much more long-term thinking and by that I very much do not mean the kind of long-termism of Elon Musk or others who are envisioning a future on mars or that's that sort of thing is not what I mean. I just mean that General oval long term thinking like sustainability or the sort of how to be a good ancestor or the kind of commissioner for the future that Wales has recently and installed as well a kind of thinking that you do think about the future and future Generations.

But at the same time it's not just really being able to think about the future. It's also thinking about the past in the different way and in general thinking about the future both the past and the future because I do think actually presenters and the sort of tendency to only think for one or two generations or even shorter electoral Cycles or in terms of History only modern history of nation states that is actually a real major flaw in modernity as well as the other things I mentioned before so I'm also think just as we are having to imagine a new future.

Of kind of drawing on different kinds of marginalized or older forms of knowledge can really really help in many different for many reasons. And first of all, we know actually that they work for, in 300 years modernity is destroyed more or less everything before that for hundreds of tens or hundreds of thousands of years. People did leave live successfully and I recently did a whole sort of 52 post-long thread on Mastodon about all the different examples of how what is called intermediate disturbance kind of lands different ways of using farming lands forestry and pastoralism together have been developed throughout the world and they basically work and their examples of this throughout the world.

Secondly, we may not actually have that much choice if if we do or once we do reach a stage where the larger conflict systems that we rely on now collapse then we we do have to just do things in the kind of way that how they used to be done in the past.

thirdly there's also there's some real issues in terms of equity or it will also address equity and distribution issues. And because to recognize that the kinds of knowledge that we already have have from those that have so far been marginalized I don't have much time now, but I wrote a sort of slightly weird blog about this the other day about what really the kind of dominant knowledge that operate and have shaped the world are really a tragedy of the non-comments because they go hand in hand with inequality and then fourthly, of course why it's important to draw an existing knowledge is it's because transition is how much easier if we draw on what is already there and it is already there. So and that will it I do think that's important that we don't have to become completely different. We just have to read discover the things that are actually in in all of us and that's that's why I do like the or I've been thinking about a lot the title of a green olactus book and we have never been modern because and I'm sort of using this for the this life because I think it's All of these knowledge has been they're not just in different parts of the world everywhere, but they're also here and in us in our landscapes in our stories and in our museums and by that I don't just mean here in the UK now.

I don't just mean on the kind of sort of Old English folklore kind of stuff although that as well.

But I also mean and that's why I'm using in fact the word marginalized knowledge because really there's quite a lot of different knowledge that exist under here, but that we never really do on in anyway, and that's why I'm not saying indigenous or local knowledge just now and that is in relation to all the different kind of they ask for Communities we all have here as well. And I just if I have two seconds, I want to

just quickly tell an anecdote. I was in a pit Rivers event or and an event outside the purgeevers museum as part of activating the archive where we wanted to show people different kinds of African grains. We lost the Sorghum we had so I quickly walked to Cowley Road and to one of those shops there and I found everything I needed and the Sorghum was there everything and the whole school we did with these what to people maybe seemed like exciting things really just came from 10 minutes away. And it really I just to me that was a sort of one of those moments, but I suddenly I was then had to think of chinaville's book the city on the city where you have two cities living in the same space, but they never meet and they don't know each other. So I just thought all this stuff and knowledge is just here, but we don't the kinds of people who might just stop and ask that all the time or something. They don't even know the other worlds are possible.

Right here and of course What we do have is so I'm not saying I'm the first one who's interested in all this at all. We have lots and lots of projects nowadays the activating the archive one. I mentioned just now but also the British museum has this endangered material knowledge program.

Well, there's lots of interest in crafts and in in different kinds of skills. And of course permaculture all these things. I myself recently didn't extremely good basket making Workshop where I made a basket like the on the picture here.

there was also a recent just at the last I think two weekends ago in The Observer. I just happened to see an article about the new interest in medieval medicine and then just last night. I came across a really interesting article about by chance. I wasn't there was just I came across it about a new project where old canoes Salish canoes are being rebuilt some starting to build again in Seattle as a way to kind of reconnect with all the existing knowledge.

So all this is and I'm sure you can all think of many many other examples of all this happening.

But I still feel that is a role that anthropology can play in this and that's what I just wanted to end up talking about now.

first of all, I feel given this is the sort of thing we work on in many ways. We can really help with really thinking through the politics of all this and because of course, they are sort of a lot of pitfalls or difficulties avoiding romanticization.

I mean, I think I'm slightly prone up to it myself sometimes but at the same time, how to, that we're not just imagining and ecologically Noble Savage, but sorry that's a sort of term. We sometimes used to describe this romanticization, but that we also avoid nativism the kind of not about, I have no nationalist or any kind of those sort of things in mind and very much also the problems of appropriation and all the politics around indigenous knowledge and general this I don't have time to look into read it out now about the box here on the right is from the article about the Salish canoes.

Which points out that all this is very well, but in fact the rights of the indigenous people living in this area have never been recognized and they were not even invited to the sort of creating this setup of this. So there if you do it you do need to do it well

and they are lots and lots of politics around this but we need to We can help with that. I feel I know a lot of people say anthropology itself is the problem and should go away, but I do think We having had lift through all this. Well, we we can potentially help.

secondly also I am also interested in thinking through or as part of this the commonalities of of different kinds of environmental knowledge around the world.

So this came out of this historical ecology threads I did where just looking at everything together. I was really struck by for example living fences in Ethiopia, but also here in the UK or different kinds of soil and management practices strikingly the same in West Africa when Amazon and then here as well, you have the sort of night soils and more their examples throughout the world and I think that is actually quite helpful to see that actually to see that we all have it we still have it in different ways.

and I might I think I will hoping to do a special issue around this and then of course, we have lots of different kinds of ethnographic material that can be used. It's all there like an archives and books we might as well to use Elizabeth popinelli's phrase sort of mine anthropology for to make the best of what there is especially given all the problems in the history of generating this knowledge. I think there's a sort of possibly resource of value in using it Firstly then. We also can and we should be for doing all this. We need to become much more outward looking and engaged and practice oriented writing in different ways doing more events, like radical anthropology, of course is a great example of not just speaking academic speaking to academics that we need much more of this and I'm trying at the moment to set up an MA in regenerative anthropology and practice at Goldsmith and if this works out the idea is to kind of use anthropological knowledge and insights to then help in the kind of transition that we need to be doing and then of course we can also do a lot more research. But of the kinds of things I've been talking about for example recently. I just started talking to someone who might be doing a PhD with me about Caribbean herbal knowledge and those sort of things so we but I am also open to suggestions.

That sorry that's what I meant to say. It's that's what we're doing here for to find thank you. That's fantastic coverage of the ground and I should say that really the inspiration for trying to bring this panel together has been from Helen and Paulina especially and I thought yeah, we could do it here at radical anthropology and we're going to go straight on to our next speaker.

Who's Live Raja? You can come up and if you're all right for standing here.

So Dr. Rajpuri is senior lecturer in the environmental anthropology at University of Kent and has long-term fieldwork with them rainforest panan in Borneo on their ethna biological knowledge and as well as consultancies many other countries and but has recently been turning attention to European context of change in rural Landscapes and thinking about how does anthropology bring to bear on climate science so hand over to you rush and you're able to speak there and are you okay? Yeah. Fantastic. Thanks.

Right. Well good evening everybody.

I Paulina is kind of stolen all of my good ideas No, I thought it really my comments would be a little bit more sort of personal.

In terms of my engagement with various kinds of political and environmental kinds of movements over the years and I've been thinking a lot about how we as anthropologists engage with various groups of people that we end up living with working with writing about making films about and what that means for them and for us as anthropologists in terms of sort of our identity and I suppose I should just ask everyone here. How many of you would consider yourselves Advocate or advocacy anthropologists? I'm not sure if I know what that means. Well, I'm excited.

Okay, let's say an advocate would be somebody who takes a stand.

Not necessarily does research but perhaps goes on a March perhaps testifies in a courtroom.

Translates documents legal documents makes countermaps that kind of thing. Yeah, right good.

Side well science petitions. Why not? I mean after that, yeah an activist or Advocate activists yet depends on the kind of language you're using but yes. Okay good.

Good. So everyone is on board here? Has anyone feel a bit nervous or reluctant? to call themselves and Advocate anthropologists or an activist anthropologist This is the weather about apology. I know I just wanted to make sure who my audience is.

If you well, yeah, I mean some people do feel you're right. There is certain contexts where we feel perhaps more comfortable.

I mean that was one of the early lessons that I learned as a graduate student and I started in NGO on environmental NGO in Hawaii.

Ostensibly to work on conservation rainforest preservation kinds of issues and then joined a group of native Hawaiian activists who were protect trying to protect their forests from geothermal development and my little University based NGO got involved with them and we being in Honolulu as opposed to the big island where much of the intervention was happening ended up in the state legislature writing testimony.

Giving speeches organizing protests having meetings with the governor, etc, etc, and getting quite involved in this big campaign.

That had Fairly large demonstrations with lots of people getting arrested making the front pages of the New York Times. And so this was all very heady kind of stuff to be involved with as a graduate student and it was but it was very easy to get sucked into and find oneself really going Way Beyond what was kind of expected of an academic anthropologist.

times But I found it very very rewarding.

Not only did I make very good friends with native Hawaiians and come to understand much better. The situation of their lives the sovereignty movement in Hawaii and the links between sovereignty and Environmental Protection, but I also learned a lot about running an NGO and working with Fellow students and others from the public who were interested in this issue. I think the first thing I realized that after making many mistakes is that we all do is that, people have very different levels of

commitment and amongst my anthropology colleagues. I would say over the years. I found that.

they sort of fall along a spectrum from wanting to do good anthropology and produce knowledge and understanding interpretation. So I would call that kind of scholarly role to some that are more interested in education going Beyond just the education of universities, but perhaps training capacity building these kinds of activities that some of us get involved with and then onward to more roles as kind of a mediator serving mediation either translator interpreter or literally mediating between different kinds of parties and I've been involved in that between indigenous communities and say conservation ngos or government departments and that's, that's still one tries one is sort of put in a neutral position in those kinds of situations of the mediator but it's still gone several steps down the road towards activists or advocacy anthropology and I'm thinking of the roles of people like Stuart Kirsch and others who really pretty much left anthropology behind to advocate for indigenous peoples in mining cases and legal issues and land rights cases and that that's fairly takes a lot of commitment and some people would say that that crosses the line.

So to speak and one's objectivity is an anthropologist perhaps as compromised in those situations if that's important, but this subjectivity objectivity.

Issue really becomes quite clear in these kinds of situations.

After that working in Indonesia was a very different situation working with the panone and Borneo the panan were involved in blockades and Sarawak to protect their lands from loggers. That wasn't the same in Indonesian Borneo and kalimantron where I was working, but there were other issues associated with with land rights.

Non-tember Forest product collecting by Outsiders Etc. So people were still trying to protect their lands and their resources. I was a little bit difficult to get involved in the way. I was in Hawaii. I wasn't of course in Indonesian citizen. I was on a permits I could be thrown out at any moment could be blacklisted. I was very different kind of roles that I had to engage in as a researcher and potential activist and supporter of the communities. I was working with so that was Sometimes very difficult kinds of situations where we were in various cases sort of confined to quarters or put under house arrest.

Over the years working there. So there it was not quite as as simple as working in your own country where you have kind of Rights and protection somewhere from the legal system. But so working in those kinds of situations very different context for engaging and sort of activist anthropology.

We were involved in a project there called culture and conservation in the early 1990s was trying to Pioneer the ideas that through through helping communities to revitalize their cultures to maintain them was a way to maintain the kind of strong ident cultural identities and feelings of Pride about one's community's Lifestyles and places and that that would inevitably lead to more support for conservation. At least that was some of the ideas of how to integrate these two aspects and that also again challenged Notions of sort of objectivity and we had many debates whether or not it

was important to do research first and then activism or one could do both at the same time. And what should be more effective in our arguments.

It was certainly the case in Hawaii.

Where say the I don't know many of you have heard of the Hokulea speaking of canoe building very famous, rebuilding of the Hawaiian long-distance.

Voyaging canoes in the 1980s led by Ben Finney and anthropology economic anthropologist.

You know had this massive effect across the Pacific of revitalizing not only knowledge about navigation and about canoe building but in general supported a specific wide Revival in in culture in Native languages and practices Etc.

In in Indonesia, we it was a small project. It was but it fairly successful. I think the most important thing we did is we had young people from the communities who finished high school are going to University come back and do studies of all the different kinds of practices in their communities that were disappearing from Pottery to basket making to hunting to fishing to traditional bullion or song Cycles Etc and filming recording and producing kinds of archives archival materials basic ethnic ethnography that we felt was really important and That whole like that idea kind of harks back to Georgia Pelle that were many of you may have heard of Georgia Powell. Anthropologists worked in Borneo and founded the Urgent anthropology research fund, which the Rai has been sort of a holder and disperser of Fellowship since the 1990s and Georgia Powell was Very much a sort of some people would call illegal Anthropologist, but really he was an anthropologist interested in the rights of the communities. We worked with and very much pushing the the line that securing land tenure for indigenous peoples was probably the most important thing we could do in the long term to promote self-determination, but he also argued against intervention. He was very much against development interventions. And in fact wrote a very famous essay called the pernicious effects of development kind of recognizing the complexity of Social and ecological systems and saying, how how can we Push change intervene without understanding what's going to happen and so a very reluctant to do that. But what he did Advocate was really good ethnography for communities that the best way to help people was to provide them with that kind of cultural knowledge and not well traditional knowledge, but even contemporary cultural knowledge that that is disappearing and by doing that we give people the tools the resources to to build Futures to be more resilient as as change occurs.

so I'm I think that's an important lesson to remember and I think for those who feel who feel unable to say walk a picket line get themselves arrested or or challenge people on even on social media that Doing good, ethnography as anthropologists do is still an extremely important contribution to the future going forward.

How much time do I work? a couple minutes Okay.

Another incident from from Vietnam where I was asked.

to do a preliminary study on a new protected area in in the and the Ana mountains just south of Hanoi and we were asked to find out what would be the impact of local

people on a new protected area and we thought and of course we thought well, that's rather strange. What about the impact of the protected area on the local people? So we did a little bit of counter sort of counter research counter mapping there to try and convince the World Bank and others that in fact, the protected area was going to have really quite important impacts on local people's ability to use resources to promote their traditional practices such as traditional house building traditional funerary practices Etc the harvesting of snails and other kinds of natural non-tember Forest Products in those Limestone mountains and so that was a bit of sort of counter mapping done in using research but also advocacy in our documents and our seminars and presentations to conservation agencies. And I think they they took a different view after this project towards communities. I think there they were worried about communities abilities to protect their own lands from outside forces, which is a legitimate concern, but I think they overestimated. In fact that local people are having on the community on the forest around and finally most recently. I've been working in India in in the Southern India looking at invasive species and how they've been impacting local communities of slowly and Link diet people's who live in the the mountains on the border of are not to get Tom will not do and these communities are pretty poor subsistence Farmers very much dependent on government handouts and being squeezed from all sides and also having much of their young population, leaving as we find around the world including in Europe rural flight and there are our mission is sort of to to try and bring local people's knowledge and experiences of how they're dealing with invasive species and the effects on their communities to upward from the bottom from the Grassroots up to decision makers and conservation agencies in India and abroad and to try and begin to sort of make You know make these voices heard in these conversations.

invasive species are just one example of biodiversity change that is happening all around the world as a result of climate change and other kinds of Impacts of development and urbanization Etc. And so trying to understand how local people are dealing with these kinds of impacts now is extremely important and here we're fighting that age-old notion that somehow.

Rural poor rural farmers are victims of environmental change and have no agency and no ability to react and change as as we have are seeing in these areas and so again it another kind of role is serving kind of as a mediator and trying to in this case. We're trying to convince the Forty Department to allow for trials.

To demonstrate traditionally use of fire to manage Forest Landscapes, which has been fairly successful in Australia, but the solely get have a very old tradition of burning the forest undergrowth every year in January just before the dry season to promote growth of herbs and grasses those understory of those forests are in our choked with lantana camera terrible invasive species and they claim that they can control that invasive species if they're allowed to burn but convincing the Forestry Department to allow people to burn their forests is a tough task. Okay. So that's a few things.

I wanted to say. I hope that was interesting and stimulating and happy to answer any questions later, right? Thank you so much that that was such a quick tour of so many different levels of intervention and when I'm moving into the activist fear with Paul, And I just want to say how yeah amazing thrilled down to meet Paul and I first realized what he was up to with this spread in the guardian on the the river roading should be a sacred being and Paul is goes between has kind of this trickster like manifestation of going along with all the knowledge of legal rights of nature as a lawyer of the rights of nature goes along to try and persuade the police or the feral developers that actually this River or that tree has rights and should be protected and then when they don't listen to me jumps up the tree or prevents the River from being desecrated so yeah, yeah.

Thank you. Very instruction. That was lovely. I would actually second sales Bill really nervous coming on after credential academics where my main qualifications seems to be being a bit eccentric and in one of the few people it's behind the cameras one of the few people. It's really brightly. I'm one of the few people who yeah, that's right.

We've got let's say the next time right here. There we go. We yeah, you're right thinking right? I'm being one of the few people who who live in the middle of a site a title so much in London and that seems my main qualification being if I'm gonna give it a go. So there are two main things that came together and to bring me into this world of I guess local nature protection activism and all the rights of nature of things with that and they both happen six years ago, and I didn't realize when each of them happens they were going to lead into the same sort of area, but I'll tell you them briefly.

in February 2017 and I wrote a very last minute pro bono legal advice for some tree protectors and Sheffield and we're trying to say thousands of their streets and being chopped down and actually completely surprisingly the advice actually worked and the police listened to it for once they don't normally do that and backed off the trees didn't get chopped out. Just great and I became this sort of go to Barrister for a number of years and from that other different tree campaigns got in touch with me. I'd rather I'm embarrassed to my day job. Well, it's just that one at the start confusing otherwise and other tree campaigns got in contact with me and I realized that there is a huge level of destructive attitudes towards nature that's being done in this country. And as kind of late-stage capitalism enters. It's kind of death throws and nature is being destroyed an alarming rate trees Rivers Wildlife habits. That's all of it in the UK. She's already one of the most Niche to Peter countries on Earth and they realize the need to change the relationship between law lawyers and nature. So I found in lawyers for nature as a group to try and offer and support to local communities that we're trying to protect nature and then instantly became completely overwhelmed by the level of support is needed and realize that actually in my spare time. I just didn't have the capacity to offer that support to every campaign. So I've tried to offer sort of brought high level support to campaigns so general advice them, but also to change

that relationship to fix the underlying broken problem that we have in this country and which we have exported around the world through English colonialism, which is this Seeing nature as a dead resource to be exploited for human ends.

That is the underlying crisis.

That is the crisis which is causing all of the other symptoms and the climate crisis to sole destruction to Forest destruction to soil completion the problems of the water cycle pollution. All of it. That is the underlying issue that we have and it started here and we help to export it around the world and so we need to end that attitude here.

I believe in order to begin solving all of the crises which all in alluded to in the first set of slides.

So, how do we do that? Well, one of the things I'm looking at is rights of nature, which is this idea that nature should be given legal standing and rights to bring legal cases and also to be given guardianship and it's happening All Around the World in lots of different ways. And the one that I'm most interested in is the one Canary River in New Zealand which by way of an active New Zealand parliament in 2017 was given its rights given self ownership and giving a guardianship body and of course New Zealand has a very similar legal system to the UK.

So there's no legal impediment why we couldn't have the same thing for our rivers in this country. But of course, what's the main difference between England and New Zealand? is the existence of the Maori people and around the world we see that rights of Nature and an attitude towards nature of seeing it as alive as a being to be respected rather than something that's dead to be exploited.

Largely coincides with those who have an indigenous voice in their societies.

So I realize that actually we were going to struggle in this country to change the law without changing that underlying relationship.

That's very hard to do.

In a country, which is not only the most one of the most nature depleted on Earth.

But was one of the first on Earth to be colonized and to be disconnected from the land over a thousand years ago.

That thousand years ago.

So coincidentally back in February 20, January 2017. So a month before I did that advice I didn't see the connection at the time and I was being hounded off the canalom ever adjust waterways by tedious bureaucrats who were demanding that I moved 25 miles in a year rather than 15 miles in a year and hassling me with yeah people coming around to my boat because someone in the office of Milton Keynes that notice on a spreadsheet and Excel spreadsheet almost certainly Pauline would say that I wasn't moving far enough and I had a choice then I can either move on to land, but I didn't don't live in a house particularly or get a very expensive Mooring in London there about 10 to 20 grand a year. Just remembering or I could do something completely ridiculous and get a map of London and work out if there were any rivers that no one was doing anything with and see if I could just moved my boat there. Okay and see what happens and I looked at a map and most rivers in London are either gone the

entirely the fleet is entirely underground the taverns underground many of them have truncated like the quality some like the ones always still above ground, but there's a weird right near the entrance you can't get in and some that Darren a big enough but a bit too far out of central particularly dark and there was one that caught my eye, which is the river roading.

Which is the third biggest river in London who's heard the river roading? Well, that's not you that's been a normal that how much of that is through the trailing of this this talk. But yeah, it's generally no not many people know of it but it's a third biggest river in London after the Thames in the league and flows down for about 35 to 40 miles from near standard airport into the Thames in barking and on its lower reaches. There were big house boats on the creek, but in the river part above barking town, no one's ever lived there. There was no navigation Authority in charge of it and the river was kind of Forgotten post industry or mess and I thought that's the perfect place to me. So not really knowing what I was doing. I moved my boat there and spent six months being terrorized by local kids who thought I was a weirdo. They went entirely wrong about that, but I didn't deserve to be terrorized for it and then had the idea of setting up a project that would avoid the worst excesses of the canal and River trust which were as I see it sort of very bureaucrats.

You were far removed from what's actually happening on the ground trying to direct things across an entire country without having any local knowledge or placement and so I set up and a charity called the river roading trust and we leased the River from the crown of State because it's a title of its own by the queen and the ground state and then the charity then rents Moorings to the boaters. So I encourage other people to bring their boat to just slow at first as everyone's like what the hell is this a bit weird as now picked up and the money so and it's a combination of the cheapest more is in London, but some money and then one day volunteering a month from the voters for their Mooring to improve the river and it all goes directly back into the river. There's no salaries staff at all. So literally we just spend all that money buying trees benches tools that kind of thing and we've had results and but those results of being I've also taught me things over time and taught the rest of the trust things as well. So we began with little picks and trying to take all the rubbish out of the river and when you do it, once you think ah, this is just the build-up from years past it's fine. It's gonna be better in the future. If you come back again A year later on it's exactly the same again and a year later. It's exactly the same again you realize that actually this local knowledge isn't enough. You have to then campaign for change it to the whole packaging industry the entire way out Society. He was in packaging and waste and we can't just keep picking it up, but also gives me a really valid and angry right to speak in companies who dare to make profits out of just producing waste they know is going to end up in the river and for me to say I am not your slave why you can't all talk with you? And I get angry there right? Because I feel it because they're hurting my River the river that I love and that comes through.

I'm not just like an angry tedious activist going and we want to change system is that I want to change the system because you are hurting my river and I am trying my best to stop that hurt. Like I cannot deal with it against systemic conditions that you are creating and the same thing with the water companies, right if you we all know about the sewage crisis, but unless you actually really feel it because you see something that you love being destroyed. I don't think it cuts through in quite the same way. You can talk about the water framework directive and sewage laws and Thames water and their shareholders and we all know it's awful.

But I really feel it and others who really care about this really feel it and that comes through to terms water and in addition as well.

You can have all the all the laws that you want, but actually if they're not.

Upheld then it's not much you can do. So for instance on the roading. There were a number and I got another minute. Okay finished. Yeah, okay on the roading and there was an illegal security Bill happening that we wasn't even known. So it was definitely it's a criminal act that no one was even checking and we happened to go past. We were doing a volunteering day that day and saw it and if we hadn't notice it probably had been going on for months it probably still be going on now because no one the environment is still even check anymore. So there's all these laws. What's the point? No one can see it. So I regularly walk the river and check the only one that does so in London's third largest river. Yeah. I'm just me and my spare time just being like Oh, there's some sewage going in here. So Madness, isn't it? But that's that's the this idea of like deep deep nature connection and like I was walking along the river.

We a couple of weeks ago with a poem and there was an area that I thought soon as coming into but I didn't know and suddenly I heard this rumbling and it hunted out in one bit go and I got a video of it and went on Twitter and it got a couple hundred thousand shares all around the country and immediately the next day.

I went back in Tim's water were pumping the sewage out and taking it proper proper treatment, right? So that's the power and if I hadn't been walking there that day would still be happening now and just to bring those two threads together very quickly like that one more minute.

What is teaching me is that? There is a real space for the role of indigeneity. Maybe we want to call it something else to avoid that word in this country. We can't treat obviously indigeneties and now because we we don't have a people who belong to these land specifically more but I think there's a real important place for the role of it.

Making engineering into a verb.

Into something you do a relationship that you have and that relationship being open to anyone from around the world no matter what your passport says and where you were born. Do you wish to have a relationship with these lands? Do you connect with a do you spend time with them? Because that's often crucial is what I noticed on. The roading was that being on the river led to a deep knowledge of it and that without even trying led me to a deep love of the river.

That develops from without me even knowing it and again, the final stage was that love without me really knowing it brought me to as you probably saw a moment. I talked about the rubbish in the sewage a deep not desire a deep need to protect my River and that for me is that role of local knowledge and care and that role of indigeneity that we need to bring back.

Because I think without it we're going to struggle to achieve those bigger changes on the political and legal level that we need to invert the crises that we face. Oh.

You know, you just can you share your screen if you're gonna you can sure sure.

Well done. Helen was going to introduce I see what you Can Depend up but you came back well pin you up matter so well, yes, I'm going to do that. Thank you.

Great. Can you see my screen? Yes. Yes we can and we want to see you.

I think that's I think that's okay.

Oh, sorry. So well, thank you.

This is that's used as any Magda will come in. I mean she speaks and she speaks. Okay. So our next speaker is Magda book check Dr. Michael Jack from the Humboldt University Berlin who is involved in a lot of research around these these issues around material culture and de coloniality and thinking about how to work through environmental questions.

She is the co-chair of the traces research project, which is the agenda for climate change text studies and social justice. And so I'm going to hand over to to Magda with this wonderfully enticing and the mountain.

Okay. Thank you.

Thank you so much Helen, and thanks Paul. This was really an inspiring talk. And what I will do here is to perhaps try to talk a little bit about a different connection with water in the landscape, and I hope you can hear me.

Right. Okay, so let me start with a short story.

In 1931 Antonio Gramsci wrote a letter from prison that included a Story a tale of a mouse who drunk milk that had been prepared for a sleeping, baby.

So the baby wakes up and finding the glass empty starts crying and the mouse goes to the goat to ask for some milk. It feels very sorry for what it has done.

Unfortunately, the goat has no milk because there is no grass.

The Mouse runs to the field and the field is too parched the mouse goes to the well, but it has no water because it needs repairing.

So it proceeds to the Mason who hasn't got the right stones and then the mouse goes to the mountain, but it finds that it has been devastated by deforestation.

So desperate the mouse tells the whole story to the landscape and promises that the baby when they grow up will replant the Pines Oaks and chestnuts.

Convinced by that the mountain donates the stones which are given to the Mason who repairs the well and so on and on and on so the baby has plenty of milk to sustain its growth.

So when the baby becomes an adult they plant the trees and everything changes the land becomes fertile and regenerated and I start with this tail of the Italian philosopher

journalist and politician to think a little bit about this relationship between people animals plants, but also between growth and regrowth scarcity and abundance so gramshi was born in the village on the edge of monteferu hills in the western part of Sardinia. So this is the region we are talking about and can you see my the correct? Yeah, we're on your title. Okay. Okay.

We have a different.

We have a different slide online, I think.

let me just have you got the I'm top with the arrows. Can you move it forward with arrows or with? The we're not seeing you'll move. Okay, let's have a look.

candles who participate online see the map I'm still seeing the title. No, just the title, right? Okay. Sorry about that. Let's just try to do that.

If you if you make it smaller, maybe it will move forward.

If you come out in full screen.

Sure, I was trying to okay. Let me just do that.

Maybe we can do this.

We've got the map we've got an excellent. Great. Sorry about that.

Right so so gram she was born in the village in the region of oristana on the edge of the hills in Sardinia and here you can see this western part of the island and then let's hope this will work.

Sorry about that.

Perfect.

The slopes of the multifaru you can see them in the background on the right.

Are in this picture, but we will stay in the Flatlands of the province.

Several rivers flow from the mountains into the plains creating a network of fresh-water marshes lagoons and drainage canals all flowing into the Gulf of oregano and they are part of the globally connected ramzars or ecosystem that are key nesting sites for migratory water birds, so you can see the little map here and I believe that there is a Rams are water scape in London as well in wolfensteau.

so the plants of this aquatic landscape like the spine rush or what Italians called jungko and the giant Reed or kamna the tall ones here either are vital for the fauna Flora, but also key to the prevention of coastal erosion.

So the wetlands and their ecosystems are also of great importance as it's projected that by the year 2100 that water levels in oristano might rise up to 84 Centimeters. Hugely affecting the area.

So I came to think about the relationship between people animals plants and the landscape through things baskets made with junko and Kana that I was researching as part of an ethnography of the collections in the Berlin Museum. And this was a kind of multi-sighted Patchwork ethnography of material culture of weaving that happened to take place during covid. So it was in different ways affected by the pandemic and continues in patches until today.

So revisiting the sites from which the collections were acquired in year 31 and you can see a picture here taken by The Collector. I met with a number of makers of objects

today and I learned that due to Environmental Protection measures access to junco and Kana is currently restricted.

However, the basket Weavers do not consider themselves as causing scarcity or depletion or ecosystem imbalance.

They see plant collecting as multi-species collaboration.

So they feel that one needs to be accused to the plants as you can only collect them at a particular point of the year when the blades are of specific flexibility.

Not too young hard or dry and the tall sticks of canna are obtained only once a year at a specific phase of the moon and the process involves walking carefully between the bird nests and pulling just a few bits from each plant. So one maker explained that the collecting of junco is a bit like gardening as it involves pruning collecting seeds and then spreading them around so that the plant grows better and more abundant.

So the practices of using communal lands to collect and garden the waterscapes interview contrast with the emergent models of wetland protection.

So with the threat of climate change local authorities and environmental organizations want to prevent sourcing plants from those marshes and the lagoons and as an alternative a recent International environmental project proposed what they call a sustainable development cooperative.

So the project would buy land in the village and planned junco so that the basket makers would then make objects from the material? The only condition would be to make a collection of more modern designs once a year that could be then sold as sustainable Heritage in places like Milan for example.

Yet the basketmakers very quickly rejected to the plant to set up a Cooperative. The project staff said that the Weavers were suspicious backward and did not understand the need for initiatives aspiring to build a sustainable future and here I quote one of the stuff from the Environmental Protection project.

They feel there is somebody always going there to take their knowledge land and stuff get rich with it and they don't get the recognition what they've done and who they are. They're always somehow afraid of sharing.

A sustainable design specialist within the project said that the basket makers kept asking her. Are you going to sell them for thousands or show other people in China how to make these baskets and then we will never be making them again.

So for hair the environmental priorities did not come through all of the actions were driven by fear.

The Weavers were reluctant to share as they already had an experience with core production run by designers this initiative collapsed in the 80s leaving many out of work.

They understood the politics of value.

Of turning their craft into design and creating added value that would never trickle down to the maker.

The new cop was set up with two designers two e-commerce Specialists and a journalist. As one of the Weaver's emphasized all of them being from the outside.

The three basket makers were initially interested in joining. We're supposed to be producing objects as they said to pay a salary of nine.

the Weavers felt that's the environmental project seems to have completely misunderstood the very core of the relationship between people and plants.

The material could not be obtained from anywhere just like in the case of Foundations plan to create this Wetland Plantation for junco.

They also felt.

Sorry.

That that was a whole privatization project going on and they rejected the privatization of the landscape because they wanted that people in the local area have a continued access to communal marshes. They explained that plants could not be cultivated as they differed depending on Time season position in the waterscape.

The traditional ecological knowledge of the Weavers entailed for example, careful maneuvering of these conditions through collecting.

The plants are not just some raw material or commodity that is then made into an object but their companions that might have their own character and you can talk to people about, how for example with this basket the juncus stubborn.

It's collaborative or it listens or it doesn't listen to the Weaver.

So the Cooperative set up by the environmental project lacked this embeddedness in the local knowledge and missed the embodied ways of communicating with the plants.

So increasingly the makers find themselves in this kind of Catch-22 position on the one hand. It's illegal to collect but you don't really want to work with the Alternatives provided by such projects.

Meanwhile the project of the Cooperative ended and if the makers signed up for it, they would no longer have any support from the foundation. So we really have to also think about the temporalities of environmental projection the protection and the kind of project Titus of these kind of initiatives and think about there after lives as those who are affected by these initiatives bear the consequences of discontinued ideas.

For the makers The Cooperative was also predicated on the idea of growth.

It was supposed to always launch a collection each year and scale up production to be sold on the market to make the co-op financially viable. It was linked to sustainable tourism Etc. But the Weavers were not interested in this kind of growth which poses very interesting questions about the ways in which environmental practices might be actually embedded in the logic of private property and the politics of value in the capital of scene.

The Anthropologist Tracy Hetherington writing on the establishment of a park in the Sardinian mountains reminds us that globally oriented environmentalisms are rooted in Western ethnocentric Christian modernist romantic and liberal aspirations.

She identifies that many of the activities are part of global dream times of environmentalism rendering nature with a capital N as sacred Timeless Universal Global and always at risk.

These dream times in very different ways intersect with different projects and life projects of the people on the ground with different conceptions of place and ways of living in the environment and for me the story of the Weavers shows that while the environmental projects run by the members, for example of the activist communities aim to protect the landscape and for example, in this case in tangible Heritage, they lack intimate knowledge of the place or the relationships. So they transplant very often the scientific perspective. For example on Rams are management plans from the elsewhere tools that are seen as rational neutral and independent of place paradoxically. They might also be driven by the logic of growth and upscaling that drives the capitalist processes which led to scarcity in the first place.

So this is my last slide. Sorry about going a little bit over time.

One more minute, I guess. Okay. So at this stage, I would like to return to gramshi's story and think a little bit about the different system of gardening knowledge making and growth in which we could take seriously the possibility that plants people in water might speak to one another I would like to ask whether a mouse could give life to the mountain or if apparently anachronistic or obscure practices, like basket weaving in Sardinia or collecting Russia's can play and why the role in Environmental Protection of water scapes So I would argue with Tracy Hetherington that we need to be aware of the implications of this Museum effect and consider how places are separated from local use through environmental activism.

What knowledge is and relations might get overlooked and suppressed what assumptions are being made when we think for example about collecting is it really always about accumulation hoarding assets and degradation? So the stories of environmental Futures might not just be set by International cooperation and Global environmentalism, but by local apparently minuscule and scaled down Praxis practices. So perhaps I don't know like a mouse we can learn from the Weavers. Listen to the landscape differently. Maybe they can even tell us other stories about preserving and regenerating the landscape and about collecting planting quiet as a mouse slowly and carefully navigating the space and it's multi species companions.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Thank you so much my dad for that really introduction to kind of intricacy of connection in local specific landscape. And I know once we invite Richard Jones our last contributor we were rather overrun but Richard's got is an a professor of landscape history at University of of Leicester and is giving us a broader interdisciplinary perspective and with his fascinating studies of thousand year olds place names and the Linguistics of these place names as repository of traditional ecological knowledge and I'm sharing the screen and going to be doing the slides for Richard. So Richard come I'm just gonna do that.

Thank you very much. I'm absolutely in your hands. But whilst you're whilst, you're sorting that.

Just say how delightful it is to be part of this conversation. It's been fantastic so far and I hope not to let everybody down at the end. So as you've heard I'm a historian and so I'm interested in knowledge that has been marginalized to use Paulina's term by time and I'm interested in how we can retrieve this and apply it to contemporary environmental challenges in practical ways. My focus is very much on the UK.

So when we think about repositories of deep time traditional ecological knowledge Tech born out of long and intimate engagements between communities and their environments and shared across Generations.

Our thoughts are inevitably drawn to indigenous Aboriginal and First Nations cultures where scientific Western Scientific and philosophical principles.

Have yet fully to intrude to reorientate will views? The notion that Tech could survive in the west seems antithetical.

Among the raft of factors, which have broken the fundamental relationship between people and place. We might not increasing population Mobility people rarely stay in one place across their lifetimes.

Or wholesale landscape change driven by a range of socio-economic factors, which is meant that the structure and fabric of the land together with its flora and fauna.

It's been reconfigured over the centuries and often many times and of course the great if flawed intellectual shift of the Enlightenment, which turned its back on and indeed sought to eradicate old ways of thinking and introduce the overarching paradigms, which are shaped the failing experiment of modernity.

It's a depressing picture.

but if the majority of people are now rootless and increasingly unfamiliar with their immediate environments There are remarkable albeit fragmentary survivals of millennial old Tech which continue to communicate to us.

If we know where to look and bother to stop and listen.

some of this knowledge some of the most powerful impact and of potentially incalculable value to us as we try to navigate through the environmental challenges of present-day climate change.

Is hidden hidden in plain sight? It survives because it has been encoded into place and since places are intrinsically more persistent than the churn of people who have successively lived in them.

It has proved remarkably tenacious despite the comings and goings of people and the loss of collective memory.

Among these survivals are place names and I want to offer here some Reflections on the tech contained in and communicated through English place names.

The great majority of which were coined around a thousand years ago.

Well, specifically I want to lay out why I see them as a vital tool for addressing what has been described as the UK's most pressing climate change induced environmental challenge that of flooding.

But first some very brief introductory words on place names.

In origin most place English place names began as meaningful phrases which sought to describe something of the defining character of a particular location.

In short the function of a place name was to actively communicate information.

Rather than simply offer a passive if convenient label for the identification of a geographical location.

Many of these names took their cue from the nature of the local environment. It's topography.

Or the dominant forms of land use open or wooded cultivated or wild for instance next slide.

among these no environmental theme Is more dominant than water? The number of English place names which communicated information about the local presence and characteristics of water and watercourses run into the thousands.

They tell us about Channel morphology as specific points on a River's course.

They tell us about flow velocity depth the quality of the water.

the nature of the riverbed the nature of the floodplain Together they map riverine environments and hydrological processes in extraordinary detail.

next slide running them a close second in terms of number of those which describe trees and Woodland.

Will return to these in a moment, but for the time being we might note the well-established relationship between trees and rivers that lies at the heart of natural flood management strategies.

Trees intersect water particularly rainfall increase the time it takes for water to enter into our river systems by say doing reduced Peak flows and the likelihood of dance Downstream flooding.

next slide we might identify four reasons why historic place names remain such a valuable Tech resource.

The first is their geographical specificity.

They describe their immediate environment.

Secondly and relatedly is their geographical stability.

While names can migrate over time rarely do they move far and certainly not beyond the area in which their reference is Meaningful and understood.

These combined facets ensure that whenever a name is encountered. We can have a high degree of confidence that it informs on the past environmental conditions the prevailed in that precise location.

next slide The third aspect of note is the specificity and range of vocabulary found in place names.

Old English was rich richer. In fact, the Modern English in terms of available to be used to describe the specific characteristics of a water course or a standard trees.

This vocabulary was assiduously deployed. The name is of place alive to the Nuance differences of each feature. They named.

next slide To take one example.

Among the water names there is a small group which contains Old English, Wassa.

These occupy similar topographical locations albeit on different Rivers.

All our locations that were and remain prone to flooding.

Now other riveterm other flood terms were available to place name is but these were seemingly ignored or deemed inappropriate in these places.

So what sets water locations apart from other flood areas and what did the term Wassa denote in terms of local water Behavior? It would seem that both in the past and still today the onset of flooding occurs rapidly and alarmingly in these places and then here the relative water level rises are higher than on other parts of the river.

Was the names then are warning names places where the threat of flooding once needed to be taken seriously? And which remain at risk today? next slide but of all the Aspects of place naming which demands our attention in the context of modern climate change. It is the climate context in which they were first coined. That should catch our eye.

Most English names formed during the last significant period of Rapid climate warming on historical record.

That is between the eight and the 10th centuries ad.

This was a period of extreme weather events High precipitation and flooding.

Does this sound familiar? Indeed it was during the centuries that today's floodplains began to develop and formalize.

So if we're looking for parallels with the present.

Then it's not the 17th and 18th centuries that we should go.

Or to the scientific observations made at this time.

Rather we need to go back a thousand years beyond the scope of scientific records and instead draw from the ecological wisdom.

left by our supposedly unleaded early medieval forbears and place Neighbors for they were observing rivers and watercourses behaving in a very similar fashion to those that we encountered today and will wise enough to record their observations in the names they gave to their settlements.

next slide I believe that the detail these names provide about the nature of rivers and watercourses in their pre-engineered states and what other names tell us about floodplains and The Wider of and wider River catchments more generally including where trees once abandoned and when natural Wetlands were found might provide templates for future River restoration.

Remiandering and rewilding that will help slow the flow.

So let me offer one example.

This map shows the catchment to the river era wash which forms the boundary between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

The river name itself is interesting morphing over time from a form which indicates quite a benign River.

To one which was clearly angry and flood-prone.

This state change appears to have occurred relatively early and may well have been encouraged by significant Woodland clearance in the middle catchment.

This is indicated by clear the clearing name layer.

Whatever Trends to do here then is to reconstruct the early catchment environment at a relatively coarse resolution through place names.

As a starting point for discussions on rewarding this catchment or restoring natural Wetlands to store water.

I think what it is it shows deserves serious consideration.

It shows a catchment in a more naturally balanced state.

One with the capacity to intercept or soak up water and reduce the likelihood and magnitude of future floods.

final supplied such an exercise can be repeated elsewhere and even if localized flooding is not a serious issue.

The exercise has potential value for re-engaging people with their local environments here. And for the benefit of Paul, of course is a rapidly put together map of the river roading catchment. It shows the broken nature of Woodland in the catchment a thousand years ago areas of more and Heath as well as open cultivated ground.

Restoration of Woodland and more in the headwaters watersheds and on the tributaries where they once were found.

Would have a significant significant in impact on water flow and quality.

This map reveals tea just how prominently the river and its feeder streams once registered in the minds of the communities who lived along the river.

Who adopted place names which spoke of waters importance? The identities of these communities were shaped by these water courses.

How differently we would View and treat our Rivers if we were to do the same and what powerful tools we would have at our disposal in our efforts to curb the rising flood threat resulting from climate change today.

If we once again looked to place names for advice.

Thank you.

Thank you Richard. I think you get the prize for being on time. Yeah, thank you.

It's been very hard to the only reason I was because you saw is because I wrote my script to make sure I was well, that's a lesson to us all and so that that was an absolutely fascinating overview from people at this intricate local level and this historic perspective and as well as the bigger overviews from Raj and Paulina and there we're now gonna open to discussion and points from both the room and I think Helen's going to be in charge of sharing the room. Well one thing was Harry here did Harry turn up Harry.

Do you want to have a little bit of a sports and we haven't got loads of time, but I did want to invite Harry right around do you want to come up actually to say a little bit and then what I can to the whole floor and So people in chapter we were all trying to pick up chat. I'm gonna put you well actually if we speak of you for you.

Yeah, take me off. Please intro yourself. I'm finding that very very weird. And no I'm not I'm now finding out of finally managed to get rid of Richard Norris now, you're right, but I'm gonna rank this we're gonna go there. That's so that you're yeah, that's

it. That's element Tennessee point, which is quite funny. Yeah, it was and so yeah. Thanks for having me on so, my name is Harry and I have the honor and privilege of working with Paul the right to run campaign.

Not to mention that whole park. I went outside. Yeah.

Think yeah. So the right to roam is a campaign that we founded in 2020 trying to campaign for free fair and informed access to Nature and a national rights Rome as they have in Scotland and it's something that Paul and I work with and it's really good fun. And I hope everyone is encouraged to get involved and get involved with your local right to roam group this one in London and we have them around the country now, it's right. My background is actually in environmental Prodigy and in indigenous rice campaigning and something indigenous rights solidarity. So I thought wanted to briefly talk about why sort of I think there's been two worlds in my head. There's been that world and there's been the world of right to Rome and it wasn't until very recently. I began to realize how these relate really and how they're very very similar in many respects and I think fundamentally it comes down to the idea of what is a right to roam. What is human beings connection with nature. I think the right to roam is a human right? I think it's a fundamental thing. We as humans have weird. We're a nomadic species. We're migratory species. We've always been in And I work that's quite a lot with with hunter gatherers and the nomadism isn't incredibly important part of that and the reason it is is because if you stay in one location for enough time and you deplete the resources and you ever hunted you're not going to survive you don't respect nature, even you won't he won't survive in it as a look or no. So some of the research most of my research has been in properly but some of it's been in greenlands or not. What and I was looking at how anywhere are reclaiming a conservationists narrative being treated terribly by organizations like the WWF and that kind of thing and this horrible Fortress conservation that Russians just talking about that happens in protected areas and they're reclaiming an area between green and Canada will take yellow sauce work which basically is a an area they want to reclaim and totally control for Inuit LED conservation and scheme and as part of that they want the rights to roam and they want to be able to cross the border recognizing that they never cross the border in the first place the board of the inner between Canada and Greenland and they say the only way they can properly look after species and monitor things like oil and illegal fishing and all this kind of thing is by being able to move and being able to roam about it's a fundamental thing that indigen that people's everywhere do like all of us we're talking about it's because they're connected to Nature. If you are connected to Nature, you will understand how to live in it. If you're not you won't survive.

How does the supply in the UK today? And it's the same exactly the same principle when human beings disconnected from nature we want to survive and I think the crisis we have biodiversity in planet is one of this connection. We so disconnected from by our food in plastic packaging and that kind of thing but it still is ultimately coming from the same nature that hunter gatherers are getting their From it's just the levels of Destruction are so fast and we don't see what's happening. But like Paul was saying

if we would consider destruction we wouldn't be doing it basically so I think that's one of the reasons we did form the right to run whether we knew or not was to do with the fundamental idea of human rights to access nature and to be part of it and I hope very much that in order to be able to reconnect with nature and it's we'll move ourselves forward in doing so and be able to care about the environment a lot more. So, please do get involved with the right story and it's really good fun as well as being I think it's important we all do and this I got into touch with the radical project with a few months. Yes, I'm fine. So because I began to realize we did a dark skies trust pass and the idea of doing something where we could get access to a dark sky and the new and stars and more about what that might mean to us. And I never really there's something about this why we doing this and I think it's a human need basically be able to access and real.

This many ideas about the moon and about the Dark Skies of us looking at it. So it's really important. I think that we will have such rights and we can learn from indigenous cultures and we can learn from everywhere to really reclaim that connection with nature and to use environmental on the bridging for good things and not for it's terrible things that a lot of gorgeous use of what the mining companies whoever being activists on the religious the way to go and so I hope you can do that and don't work for money companies, but do something good.

Thank you.

Yes, thank you and she want to share them. Yeah, and I'll see if there's only and one. Yes, and he was switch on.

It's going fine. You don't worry, and there's also a A list of people could pass that around the world room for emails and could thanks Harry if you could put that to go around the room for anyone who wants to put their email on if you've come through Eventbrite, we've already got your email and the purpose of collecting that is to if there's any kind of follow-up.

Coming out of some of this discussion tonight that we be able to inform you and tell you about it and which we hope we're going to be able to generate and let's try to get some contribute. Yes. Yes, we've got casts. We've got Zoom, but anybody who in the room first and then Integration of comment or question for any of our amazing speakers. This has been such a big no. No, you just test yes. Oh Yeah, so actually all I want to do is share a little bit of information, which I'm not sure.

People are aware here. And it's specifically Portugal and Portugal was recently about a year ago the first country in the world to around by more status than the environment and I have the pleasure of meeting also a lawyer in Portugal who started this movement about five years ago because he realized in order to actually be able To have any impact on like any changes environmentally the environment itself would have to have a legal status in order to be regulated and protected and so he started this movement in Portugal and University of Florida to get this legal status for the enrollment. He actually managed to this unfortunately and the environment is now a legal entity Bible in which group and so I wasn't sure if people were aware of this but

just to know that what you're doing there's other people in other places also fighting this part and testing. Yeah.

I just wanted to share that. Thank you here. What's being said? Can you hear it? Yes, I can. Yeah, and there's the website if you want to know it's common at home of humanity before and that will tell you all about that project and the law and Etc but calming home.

of humanity or all yes common, home of human home common home coming home coming home. And yeah, it's It was quite a bit and obviously as trying to imagine this was a very long we will battle. I was actually, in the 14th Parliament when this was costing more and yeah, and we've got Catherine Williams Catherine. Can you unmute? Yes, like yes, I can bear with me and if you can see me as well.

Everybody dinner. So I hope okay. So it's just whoever was facilitating. The chapter asked me to speak aloud to comment. I'd put in the chart really interesting talks really exciting and interesting. I'm a master's student in medical anthropology by the way but I was raised as a historical geographer and I became perhaps not surprisingly a property lawyer because I'm interested in in land ownership and right. So it was really just a comment to flag. I'm really interested in things like a right to row when I don't know how it works in Scotland, but my point in the chat was that for more than a thousand years in England and Wales. We have total ownership of land and that needs to be part of the conversation when we think about things like right to Rome because all land is owned and I was also making the point that what's often spoke about on the news. Nobody has mentioned it today, but you'll see people say on the news or on the newspapers things about access to Common land.

As if they assume that we've all got a right to go on something called a common. Well, we haven't a right to go on a common is a specific landholding right to go and graze your pigs or something on a common. So it's just a flag that added complexity that I think the previous speaker speaking about portugals in a way possibly alluding to that that there are many intersecting legal rights here and in England Wales, we have this total ownership of land effectively, and that needs to be part of any thinking on these issues. Thank you.

Thanks. I was like a direct point to that which is yeah that does exist.

But also we mustn't allow it to over to stop people taking action themselves and the river are interests now has a lease of the river but we don't have any permission to any of the work we do anywhere else. I literally she's going to other people's land put in benches plant trees and dare them to stop me and I think sometimes if if we worry too much about this total land ownership go and do good things protect your nature and then stop you because they know they'll look stupid if they're trying to rest your planting a tree my life.

That would be well. Okay, like you might not mind if I come and squat on your boat or camping someone else's Garden, but other people might so intersection of Rights and what you think is a good and other people think is a good maybe different thing. So it's not that simple.

I'm afraid.

right yet.

He want to say who you are if you want to say, thank you discussion. So I still trying to bring awareness because all we talk about and say they're not buying things packed in.

It's important majority that he some of you divide and coffee or not eat after it like that. And how do we make a change? And how do we help a lot of people with the new information that they don't understand? You have a biology and how do we kind of legislating and waste and organic ways to be treated correctly in order for us to being and so if I processes back into neighborhoods for the students showcase and this incredible technology that little snow anything about even others.

libraries of and yeah, it's it's I have taken over millions of spaces all around to our outlets. And so I do believe what you're saying is and absolutely they would do better. You've got the right regular job and they can prove it and when when that face and, and obviously yeah and after doing that because of now grants me and a seven hearts and sort of days until the first city soil lab where we can actually showcase this Precision gravitational biology in order to recompose materials that we're actually waste around. I need somebody to help me. That's right. So and I'm very happy your story.

Thank you.

Any more questions on Zayn I haven't got hands up.

but in the room or if the panel wants to comment or anybody on the panel wants to come in.

I I have a question for any of those funnel speakers, but I mean I came up with this question when police walking so I guess meeting she wants to answer but there's obviously the call from making room or moving over watching the lives knowledge is our station knowledge and it is indigenous knowledge of but I agree that much nice knowledge is a very appropriate term, but just wanted to ask does the global North deserve the gift of marginalized knowledge and if so, why does the global North for how does the global North are access or on the right to be able to access and use this knowledge? Because maybe we need to think about whether it will not deserves to be able to use the knowledge is that opportunities that they have experience and kind of being erased five years.

Like out there's a macaronialism. Yeah, so that question.

Did the paddle did everyone hear that? Does anybody want to comment that anybody on the zoom? Does the global North deserve the knowledge? How do you yeah, I think I did here. Yes. Thank you. I did here most I couldn't hear the previous speaker very well before but I am yes, I think I mean that's a very very good point I and Yes, I do know where you're coming from. I mean, I sorry I struggling to find the right words. I think it's yes, I mean as you said the the sort of constant the sort of extreme ability of of capitalism when you're liberism to co-op or to co-opt and absorb and make everything its own is you see it all the time and every in every way and I think

by the way matter your but I know that's not exactly what you were talking about. But nevertheless that I was really struck by how much your project spoke to what I was talking about on these really sort of global imprecise ways and then you just got right to the nitty gritty and how then, you have this project where people are trying to do like a really good thing and then it it isn't it doesn't quite work. So but yes what your question that I think and then of course you do have the the larger huge question of Justice isn't even quite the right word, but given the whole history of everything that has already happened. It's I think it is a good question. And I'm also remembering I once went to a very good talk by Elizabeth povinelli, which was about these sort of issues and she was talking about the sorry of slightly forgotten. This is I think Flint or something like this American town that had this huge Water Crisis where people have Flint here. Yeah, exactly and But she said in the end she said so Justice isn't just about people being paid or something like justice is actually reverse the tap and I thought that was sort of that. I've never forgotten that because It is true. It's not just then. Oh, yeah, let's I mean I wasn't even actually saying nothing. Anyway that it's I don't think it should be.

About so there are my so it shouldn't just be about now that we all work together. Then we can all have the same given that we here in the north have had so much more for so long. I think you're right. It's maybe we don't deserve the solutions that other people have and we We deserve to perish or I don't know but it's I would still hope that that is some way sorry.

There's any any other panelists Paul. Do you want to face nothing to that? Do you want to come in here maybe from him? We shouldn't steal other people know it but we have our own right every single Niche that exists all around the world. There is a plant and some form of knowledge that feels that Niche and actually we don't we shouldn't be taking things out people from the Amazon anyway, because that doesn't work in our Niche because it's a different plant in this country. We have a magic regenerating plant that builds land out of water that plant is called Willow. You can literally take a branch off it stick it in the ground. It will grow into a tree I planted about 500 and all along my river and learn about and you can build buildings out of it and we baskets out of it and it produces aspirin and yeah and every single little niche that we've got our own our job is to really learn what those are for these lands because that's where that's what we need to know so actually stealing it is Amor and be doesn't even work half the time.

can I just It's fine. I wouldn't be anymore. I said later. Yeah, thank you. Okay, and actually LT. Yeah.

Do you want to speak us to on can you I mean, thank you. Hi. Hi, I'm Layla. I can't I can't change.

Anyway, thank you so much to all the speakers as a non Anthropologist. I really really enjoyed it. I lead our friends of the Welsh heart which is a local Wetlands group for the bottoms called The Print Reservoir and Paul's journey. I couldn't believe my ears. I literally wrote this thing. I didn't ma inside Candlestick studies last year and

I literally realized in my area I was like, wow this journey of connection and the love and walking and seeing things and yeah, I amazing. Anyway, I'll get to my question and Cool, what tips can you give as a lawyer to groups? Like ours is there like, I don't know anything because what you said about CRT? Oh my God the just the insanity of What groups like that and organizations like that say? Very recent example Natural England wouldn't let me plant trees on a piece of land but they are allowing a 200 meter bridge to be built across a triple SI.

So any tips, please thank you. It's Brokers.

I want to say as soon as her friends the most hard when we say to thank you can just like say thank everyone say thank you. I've seen what you've been up to on Twitter and that your little bit some of the biggest I've ever seen in London. The amount of rubbish that group is getting out of the waters is incredible and just what you are doing is show is speaking to other people and showing your love that is that is a lot that's already showing so much in terms of dealing with dealing with them institutions, with that if it's potentially gonna damage necessities, I don't do it. But if you're sure that what you're gonna do is a good thing do it and dare them to stop you. So for instance on the roading, we've got loads of Metal Sheets piling and you're supposed to put in like, tens of thousands applications.

To remove the sheet piling and naturalize it I've just gone in the last couple of weeks harvested Willows from the roading for three and plump them in all the way along. They're gonna grow there's nothing the EA can do about it and what they're gonna do what they're gonna do.

So just basically be sure what you're doing is good for nature and then just do it and I think we're just about we're gonna lose you as you you've got to go.

we started doing real contribution what we hope is that we can create a some longer event where we can hear a lot more in detail and some of you about some of your work as well. But yes, because that was incredible that you came to that.

Thank you. Thank you and Who else in the room? Somebody lets you like one or two minutes more to respond to me? Richard said what's the way when Yeah. Well, yeah, that's that's true and that let's go for any other speakers back here.

Brilliant, we've still we we can carry on for you and I would call them. Yes, okay.

So I think when we talk about these concerts keep it close to your mouth and you liberalism.

Global warmers and we forget that it's a lot more pregnant than we sometimes think.

These are not homogeneous and I think what? Oh you said is really relevant.

We have to recognize that we have our own.

Knowledge in culture even if some of it.

All a lot of it has been lost but like the historical study. He showed there's still a lot of it available and things are not so simple. They really really yeah, you you find these intersections. Oh so called model and nonmodern and old skates. You see it here in the UK. You see it in Portugal. I'm from Portugal. And for example, I heard you

saying UK is the biggest worse. They have like for you I would say for example that England in terms of law natural law, even though she gave a good example there and activism is so much behind the UK.

I'll give you one simple example. I come from ecologist until this day and this applies to the rest of Europe. We still use the same survey as being developed. I think in 2003 in the UK, which is the river the river river habitat surgery and that's what's used to this day.

in all of Europe So it is it's a very simple thing you'd be thinking. First of all, how come this hasn't been updated. I haven't we learn something since then and how can we we don't see that? Each country developing his house its own way of looking through because we can the river habit that survey. It's a really method but makes no sense important.

It talks about land use category. Then simply don't exist in Portugal and misses out a lot of land use categories that exist for you.

So what is happening there and I can tell you I come from a family is sports against damn projects important very large. Yeah projects one of them will stop the forge of Goa now, there's recognize that UNESCO polar heritage site, and there's a big rewilding project over there and I can tell you Portugal is still in the midst of completely and utterly destroying all it's revering habitats. One of its last wild rivers was some more and yeah and the fact that Was a European I think the area designated in that area.

Had no and impacts at all. And so we can't say things are more than capitalism stuff like that because it's frequently European. Well, I'm particularly skeptical as a Portuguese of certain things that come from Europe nevertheless. This is good law.

The river habitat survey is a good starting point.

Or looking at reverse and yet so much has been destroyed and here in the UK. I think you guys sometimes don't value the activism.

you have, we don't have this kind of activism. I'm part of a group that maybe for the whole of no more support you we're just a dozen we mean up each other and they we can barely do anything. You know, it is really hard to do anything pre-cuttings in cities happen all over the place and it's in a massive scale and can't stop with the top and yet you hear ridiculous. Sorry, if I'm taking very long which is here ridiculous arguments like and it's not even economic. It's not even capitalistic.

It just insane here arguments. Like I'm cutting the trees because I want to protect human lives because the tree is gonna fall in some and on protecting human life.

Things like this. This is a local local authorities and so things are not so straight to work. You have a lot of things here in the UK the value.

We have a lot of things to value in which there's a lot to value in the global South in such and such and I think one thing we have to realize is that all levels we have this mix of modern and non-modern within and within us our knowledge is a mix there's no such thing as saying apple is North capitalists all this stuff. It makes no sense because it also denies one thing. We have also been subjected to capitalism. We have

also means of yet but industrial we have also been subjected to massive infrastructure projects story our environment.

That's it at a scale that you don't see in some other country.

What is completely been destroyed by all sorts of infrastructure? Thanks. We we probably got time for about three or four more contributions. Thank you so much for that perspective. And we're I know that Paulina wants to say something Paul. So wanted to talk to Richard's point you and are there some of Chris were you gonna see? What do you okay Paulina? Why don't you say some more and then we'll ask Paul and Chris if you want.

Thing and yeah, I was just thank you for also talking about rivers again and this way and I just wanted to say I've really been enjoying that as this overarching seam, especially because of course recently.

We've been hearing more and more and more. It's not just floods though, which of course it's all floods and droughts, but I never quite anticipated. I didn't know that climate change that the first thing we're really talking about the most or sorry. I should say we and everything but here at the moment drought is the big seam and raise us potentially.

Drying out or not flowing anymore and that is now happening in so many places. I mean what you just said in Portugal Colorado River in Italian rivers and in Germany the the rain transport not even working anymore. All these things are happening right now, and we I yeah, so I just wanted to raise that. It's actually let's continue thinking and talking about rivers. I don't know. That's that's all I'm saying. Thank you. Let's stop.

Thanks, Paulina and did Paul did you want to talk to Richardson? Yeah, just say I mean I'm I really loved Richard's talk you something. I'd ever thought. Oh, yeah one is actually really beautiful and it made me remember I forgot to say something which is I'm the importance of deeply local knowledge and activism for combating shifting baselines syndrome, which I think we all know what that is, right. So shifting based on syndrome is this idea that as the environment gets worse every generation just gets used to the environment in their time. So we actually have no idea what we've lost how rich and beautiful nature once was but actually although we can understand that concept on intellectual level. I believe that the main way of fighting it on a hyper local level where you could actually only understand what you've lost so about a month ago. I was sat in a local plan meeting new and they're basically saying yeah Newton's got some of the worst access to Wild space London and there's nothing we really do about that because it's a really built up area for the poor people.

What we're going to do and I basically went back to the ancient maps.

Is a map from 1890 just before they built most suburbs of London in the East and there's huge areas of what once marshes some of the richest most beautiful title marshes in the country huge areas of them that were then build over but there's one area here, which is how I think all the Back River did some historical research. It was actually filled in the 1920s. I went for a walk along it one day and found out

that actually the entire route, although have been filled in was still undeveloped. So I quickly put together a load of maps and the thing of why they should re-digit again and with some pictures of the root and then put it on Twitter with the story about how how can we Resurrect The Ghost River of East ham and bring it back to life and what a unique opportunity that was and here's the email and local plan Department. He wants to support this plan and they got loading probably too many ways actually emailing and hopefully that's now gonna go in the local plans already that ghost river right? So wherever you are like and that comes with looking at them that's also detailed knowledge of what your area is what still remain tiny scraps of nature there. Are you can Advocate that to get rid of that shifting Baseline stage when we get used to this then you didn't have any nature that we have.

Actually, can I can I respond to that? Yeah, Richard. Yes, because I mean I restricted myself because of the time just talking about the The environmental information contained in in what we call major place names so, Village or town names Parish names but as you've discovered Paul, the heart underneath those there are hundreds hundreds of thousands of small minor names of fields and parts of fields that we can draw upon potentially. I mean, it's it's an enormous piece undertaking to actually collect all these names over time, but they really give you the fine detail to enable us to to really think about floor of fauna topography former River channels and the like in in my new detail remarkable resolution over over long periods of time and we need a kind of an army. We need we need to kind of Citizen science to collect this day and then start start to apply it and think about what actually telling us about how these places have changed over time.

The other the other thing that that I might mention is that I think we're all probably very aware that in our efforts to to rise to the challenges of climate change and the like we're going to have to Recon reconfigure the landscape and Remodel and reshape it in in a variety of of ways and that's going to be hard. This is a bit like you're shifting light and shifting Baseline syndrome because people think that the landscape that they live in has been there forever and they they can be I mean they can be very upset if you suggest that adult to change in its character. I'm thinking about how people respond to the idea of putting large stands of trees back into a landscape, but it seems to me that if you can say well you're living in a place where once people identified with trees or you you say you're living in a place where people want.

Identified with the river closely. I think the opportunities to Advocate and to change people's minds or to to open their minds to to the idea of a new configuration of the landscape. We'd probably be made easier.

Thank you, Richard Magda. Do you want to have a maybe the last word? Did you want to talk or talk Crystal? I'll just just a 30 second one. So I'll leave space for Chris. What I wanted to say. Is that what what I learned from some of the talks today is that archives and past practices are not only markers of the past but also could become prefigurative practices that perhaps signal regenerative Futures what Pauline was mentioning and I think it is about learning how to work for example with

maps with place names and be a little bit more radical in terms of it's not only about archiving but also an archiving and putting the willow back in and I really I really loved how these talks came together in this way as a call for action and for prefigurative practices.

Thanks. Thanks very much. My dad. That's not lovely summation and Christy you want to say anything contribute anything because I mean just 15 Baseline syndrome. I mean, it's just such a useful powerful concept.

Paris right around I mean it's like The part of the shifting base right since obviously nobody and nobody in the city like London has ever kind of seen the Milky Way, right? And when we had had some people over to stay with me and happy they said no, have you even got the Moon I mean because they felt really they were feeling sick because they couldn't do Epping me the Dark Moon ritual but and if they said we've seen a few projects to the Moon Over the future, kind of slide, but where is it? So I mean yes and I don't know it's just that one of the things that and radical answer quality how we Define ourselves when we first establish herself we to find ourself is doing reverse technology so many ways, but because of course as theology, but again, especially sort of like, institutionalized Anthology is as like, how do we get Savages? How do we get people in Africa everywhere else to to develop and we used to say and it's still relevant. Well, yeah.

Development that's a really useful idea of really good idea. We in London and elsewhere in the west. We really need to be developed on a moral level. I know a spiritualist so many levels we need to debris development.

It's slightly other way around we need to allow indigenous people all around the world all these people with local knowledge. So help us to develop sufficiently to be able to survive into the future. I thought this evening's Combination of talks to completely magical so I'm obviously the huge that window of sports. I will just say one other thing perhaps if I could just in the time left when we when we establish radical Anthology, one of the one of the things we all thought was how is it and why is it that children that go to school don't even know that there's such a thing as antibody and it just as soon as we started thinking about these are yes, of course because the kids are taught the thing called geography another thing called history another single really just studies ever and the critical point is that young people should not join up the dots. They shouldn't be able to get a glimpse. I'm kind of the big picture because if kids had a at that age had a glimpse of the big picture, they just wouldn't be they wouldn't put up with a kind of narrow boxes into which they're gonna be put through the rest of the lives because of course school is a kind of initiation right into this particular narrow culture. And so I suppose just one of the thoughts I've been having all along is yes, of course, it's the local knowledge the indigenous.

It's so lovely here. They come bounce back into this country about local knowledge. But but still a big question is how do we connect up those local knowledge? That still is pretty important. It's just to stay too local and not kind of feel that we can connect on each other I think notes and I just been having a look through the chat and

there are so many interesting conversations going on in the chat about tree planting and different ways of thinking about the land and memories of place names and I just also want to extend such gratitude to all of you all of you being here and being here on zoom and all that our speakers. They're just bringing together these fascinating debates and questions and experiences with your business and practices of these very these very local forms of knowledge wherever people are working and acting and living in the world. So thank you all so much and thank you to right. Yeah inviting me and Paulina to help bring this together and I'm great. Thanks. We have the hope that this is not going to be the only such event and that we might be able to do something with more with more time which might involve workshops and ideas that are you Of getting out there into Landscapes to to, really start to create those those connections because which are happening evidently in our own landscapes in an urban and Landscapes of London and further across the country. And so there's so much more to be done that that is why we have tried to collect people's names to keep contacts and we hope that there's going to be some future if that seems like a good idea because we've hardly We've hardly kind of opened up the ground here. We've only just made an initial dig an initial dig in that it's just a little start. And so thank you very much Helen.

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