

For the love of things:

An interdisciplinary exploration of
object attachment

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Abstract

From teddy bears to wedding rings, all humans are capable of developing close attachments to certain objects. Yet, despite these attachments being ubiquitous, they have received almost no attention from archaeology, and misconceptions abound. This thesis considers the psychological construct of object attachment in detail, considering how it can be a useful perspective to understand how we develop social and emotional connections to particular objects.

Using an interdisciplinary approach grounded in psychology, anthropology, and archaeology, this thesis begins by considering what we know about object attachment, and what questions remain. In doing so, it becomes clear that there is a lack of understanding about how object attachment varies at the biological, individual and cultural level, how object attachment differs from other forms of material engagement, and whether attachment objects themselves share any common characteristics.

This thesis considers each of these questions in turn, using evidence from psychological and ethnoarchaeological analyses. Doing so reveals that object attachment is often the result of feelings of both short- and long-term anxiety and insecurity. Attachment objects themselves share a number of common characteristics, both in their form and how we relate to them. These findings are used to develop expectations for changes we would expect to see in the archaeological record as a result of an attachment to objects. This is then used to reanalyse figurative material culture found in the Swabian Jura, southwestern Germany, around 40,000 years ago. This allows me to appraise the value of an attachment-centred perspective on the past.

In doing so, I consider how even seemingly mundane objects can shape and influence humans' social and emotional lives. Furthermore, it shows the significance of our attachment to objects, demonstrating that they are healthy, effective sources of emotional support, rather than a reflection of childishness or materialism.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References. Aspects of this thesis have been published or are under review:

The original data used for Study 1 was included in part in a paper published in *Time and Mind* in 2018 (however, the data analyses presented in this thesis were entirely unique and undertaken as part of the work towards this thesis). The reference for this paper is:

Bell, T. and Spikins, P. (2018). The object of my affection: attachment security and material culture. *Time and Mind* 11(1), 23-39.

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Chapter contributions

All chapters which are not explicitly mentioned below were the sole work of TB.

Chapter 5: The role of cherished objects as attachment figures:

- Data collection for Study 1 was aided by Esther Fagelson, who collected some of the responses in-person in 2017.

Chapter 1

Introduction

There is a teddy bear currently sitting on my bed. His name is Norris. He is wearing forest green dungarees and a red shirt, with a matching paisley tie. Norris is a little tattered and frayed - his eyes are cloudy and scuffed, the velvet on his nose is almost entirely worn away, and his dungarees could do with patching up. To anyone else, Norris probably seems like any other stuffed toy. Yet, to me, he is invaluable. He was given to me on the day I was born, and has followed me through house moves, study abroad, and numerous other life changes. All these years later, just giving him a hug comforts me and lessens my anxieties. Norris is more than just a teddy bear. He is what psychologists would call an 'attachment object'.

What is an attachment object?

At its most simple, an attachment object is an object to which a person is socially and emotionally attached. There are many other kinds of attachment – attachment based on monetary or historical value to name just two – but this thesis focuses specifically on attachments which are socio-emotional in nature.



Figure 1.2: Linus and his security blanket (Schulz 1954).

In both popular culture and academic research, such objects are often associated with children – think, for example, about Linus’ blanket in the comic strip *Peanuts* (Figure 1.1). However, our emotional attachments to objects (hereafter referred to simply as ‘object attachment’) can be lifelong, supporting us from cradle to grave (Dozier and Ayers 2021; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014).

Psychological research suggests that object attachment is not a phenomenon unique to the contemporary period but is instead a capacity shared by all humans (Keefer et al. 2012). Furthermore, a wealth of research has shown that object attachment may have wide-ranging social and emotional benefits, with the potential to bolster our physical and mental health and wellbeing, shape our responses to stress and anxiety, and cement social bonds with others (Dozier and Ayers 2021; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer and Rothschild 2020; Martin, Mathes and Schmidt 2021; Norberg and Rucker 2021; Niemyjska 2019).

Moving towards an archaeology of object attachment

Object attachment thus presents us with a fascinating insight into how our social, emotional, and material lives intersect and connect. Given archaeology’s concern with all three of these areas, object attachment may provide a novel approach with which archaeologists can reconsider the ways in which objects shape humans’ social and emotional lives. It may also provide an opportunity to ask questions about the effects this would have had on human behaviour and material culture, both today and in the past.

In spite of its promise, though, archaeology has not yet explored object attachment in any detail. We understand little about people’s social and emotional attachments to objects in the past, particularly in prehistoric contexts, and few archaeologists mention attachment to objects in their work at all. There are notable exceptions, such as Büster’s (2021) consideration of ‘problematic stuff’ left behind after death in the Iron Age but, overall, the picture is bleak.

Why this is, is unclear. However, it is possible to speculate as to some of the reasons behind this. One such reason may be the lack of research into object attachment in disciplines aside from archaeology, which has in turn led to misunderstandings, assumptions and misconceptions about our attachments to objects.

As a capacity with a basis in our psychology, we might reasonably expect to be able to turn towards psychology for answers, and it does indeed provide us with an excellent starting point for understanding the origin of our attachments. Attachment theory in particular provides a useful place to begin our discussion. Attachment theory, developed in the mid-20th century, is one of the most popular theories in developmental psychology, backed up by years of research (Ainsworth 1969; Ainsworth 1993; Bowlby 1984; Bowlby 1988; Ein-Dor and Hirschberger 2016; Fraley and Shaver 2021; Harlow 2021; Holmes and Farnfield 2014; Schore and Schore 2008; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019; Zeifman and Hazan 2016). It provides an explanation for much of humans' social behaviour, including our propensity for developing close social relationships. Importantly, attachment research increasingly recognises the significance of contextual factors in the expression of attachment behaviours, acknowledging that not everyone is attached in the same way, and that attachment behaviour can vary both individually and culturally. However, we know little about the nature of, or patterns in, this variation.

On a smaller scale, we also lack an understanding of how object attachment varies across the lifespan. Since Winnicott's (1953) initial discussion of what he called 'transitional objects' used by young children, psychology has developed a good understanding of the role of attachment objects in providing children with a sense of security (Gaddini and Gaddini 1970; Garber 2019; Herdt 1987; Hooley and Wilson-Murphy 2012). Yet psychology as a whole has only recently begun to tackle the subject of object attachment in adulthood (Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer and Rothschild 2020), and even then, only in a fairly limited way. Such studies tend to focus on object attachment as a pathological condition indicative of trauma, neglect or psychopathology. In the last five years alone, for example, there have been numerous studies considering the role of object attachment in hoarding disorders (Dozier et al. 2017; Dozier et al. 2020; Kwok, Grisham and Norberg 2018; Martin, Mathes and Schmidt 2021; Norberg et al. 2020; Preston and MacMillan-Ladd 2021; Timpano and Port 2021; Yap and Grisham 2019). If we were to rely on this literature alone, we might be forgiven

for assuming that object attachment is entirely pathological. However, as many can attest, our emotional attachment to objects can be lifelong, and is often not pathological in any way.

The more common, *everyday* kind of object attachment, which is perhaps of most interest to archaeology given its apparent ubiquity, rarely receives attention in the psychological literature (with the notable exception of Keefer and colleagues, whose research provided an impetus for my own interest in this area (Derrick, Keefer and Troisi 2019; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer and Rothschild 2020)). The mundanity of everyday object attachment may mean that it flies under the radar or is not seen as a necessary subject of study by psychologists as it requires no psychological treatment, or alternatively is assumed to be so ubiquitous as to require no study at all.

The problem we have here, then, is that object attachment is understudied. We lack in-depth knowledge of how it functions, how it affects people on an everyday basis, and how it affects the objects themselves. Yet, even if psychology did have a better understanding of object attachment, basing our understanding of any human capacity on psychology alone is not representative of humans as a whole, as psychological research is often overwhelmingly focused on Western people – an issue which has plagued attachment research, too (Quinn and Mageo 2013). Psychology may be even further limited in its usefulness for archaeologists as it focuses on people, not objects. At present, psychological research tells us relatively little about the effects of object attachment upon people, and nothing about the objects themselves. Given that archaeologists are dependent on the material traces left behind by humans, this is a key question that psychology does not appear to be able to answer.

With all of this in mind, it is no surprise that archaeology has barely considered object attachment in its interpretations of the past. For some in archaeology, as in psychology, object attachment may be seen as so common that it is not worth analysing in any detail. Such archaeologists might restrict themselves to simple comments or observations that someone may have been attached to an object (for example, Dart 1974, 168) without feeling the need to consider the matter any further. Others, however, may view object attachment in the same way that psychologists have traditionally done: as a pathological condition. Additionally, the biological nature of attachment theory may generate a certain amount of discomfort for archaeologists worried about assuming genetic or biological determinism and ignoring the impact of individual and cultural contextual factors. In an era in which archaeology is facing

up to its colonial and racist origins, there are questions to be asked concerning whether a biological framework is relevant or indeed helpful for archaeology.

Nonetheless, a small yet growing body of psychological research attests to the complexity of object attachment and its role in everyday human life (Derrick, Keefer and Troisi 2019; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer and Rothschild 2020; Lee and Hood 2021; Mandel, Lisjak and Wang 2021; Niemyjska 2019; Norberg and Rucker 2021; Preston and MacMillan-Ladd 2021; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Its connections to the social, emotional, and material aspects of our lives ensures that it remains a topic worthy of further consideration. If we better understand object attachment, we can build up a better picture of the nature of humans' social and emotional relationships with even the most seemingly mundane objects. In short, it provides a new perspective on both people and the objects they use.

Yet, more work is needed in order to develop this understanding. Psychology provides us with a theoretical basis for this study, but it has blind spots and knowledge gaps which mean we must turn to other sources of understanding. There are unanswered questions, for instance, surrounding the nature of variation in object attachment. Do non-Western and non-industrialised societies experience the same attachment to objects seen in Western, industrialised cultures? Is the expression of object attachment dependent on particular circumstances, and if so, what are those circumstances? What if Western perceptions of attachment objects as merely teddy bears and wedding rings is blinding us to common characteristics of attachment objects, characteristics which may make such objects more visible in the archaeological record?

This is where this thesis comes in. I will consider how even mundane, everyday items can develop incredible socio-emotional significance, becoming a focus for feelings of attachment. Like Norris, many objects which may seem unimportant on the surface can come to hold incredible significance for an individual or a group in their role as a focus for attachment. Over time, these objects can then provide us with feelings of security vital to our social and emotional health and wellbeing.

Developing an interdisciplinary approach

Attachment objects thus become significant sources of support throughout our lives. By studying them, archaeologists can gain further insights into how material culture can shape our socio-emotional lives and behaviour, and how this relationship affects the objects themselves, too. In turn, this may help archaeologists to better understand the contexts in which object attachment is most likely to be seen, as well as helping us to develop an understanding of the material traces of attachment, which may be visible in the archaeological record.

How to achieve this, however, is a more difficult question. Psychology's insights alone are not sufficient, particularly given attachment theory's Western origins and continuing lack of cross-cultural research. Indeed, it seems that no one discipline can provide all of the answers. The solution is an interdisciplinary approach combining theories, methods, and evidence from different fields. This may include those which do not usually consider object attachment, but which may provide interesting insights and contribute important context to our understanding of object attachment, its variation, and its material expression. Researchers are often restricted by disciplinary boundaries, which limit our ability to learn from other fields. Yet breaking down interdisciplinary boundaries provides clear benefits, allowing us to balance methods and theories from science and the humanities.

No one theory, method or discipline can provide all the answers. By taking an interdisciplinary approach, we can better acknowledge the role of biological, cultural and individual factors as a cohesive network, rather than privileging one over the others or treating them as contradictory. Such an approach, challenging though it is, helps us to reach for a view of object attachment which recognises its complexity and nuance. Furthermore, the introduction of a materially embedded approach ensures that we can ground our analyses and interpretations in archaeological evidence, and reconsider the material traces of object attachment.

In this thesis, I draw upon three main disciplinary areas.

Psychology: a basic framework, and an understanding of modern object attachment

As already noted here, attachment theory, established by developmental psychologists, provides us with a basic framework of how object attachment functions today. Through

psychology, we can understand on a basic level the psychobiological mechanisms involved in attachment, shared by all humans. Yet this understanding needs to be developed further, given the paucity of the current literature, so this thesis will need to rely on both psychological theory and methods to deepen our understanding of how object attachment functions. In particular, I will need to consider attachments to objects in adulthood, both in terms of how and when such attachments are expressed, and the nature of the objects involved.

The use of psychology is not without controversy, however. Its overwhelming drawback, as previously noted, is its overreliance on biological factors and relative ignorance of cross-cultural variation. Psychology's reliance on studies of WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) people and societies has come under increasing criticism over the last few years from within psychology itself (Clancy and Davis 2019; Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010b; Jones 2010), and psychology is now well-aware of the inherent diversity between and within different populations. In attachment psychology, this picture is changing (Quinn and Mageo 2013), albeit slowly, but psychological studies of cross-cultural variation are scarce, and studies involving non-industrialised societies are even rarer. Part of the problem here may be that psychology is generally concerned with individuals, and less interested in the interactions and connections between them (Ingold 2008, 79). Even attachment psychology is concerned mainly with pair bonds rather than broader social ties, restricting its purview somewhat. In short, psychology provides us with a basic framework for attachment, but basic it remains, and we lack an understanding of attachment on a broader scale, both inter- and intra-culturally.

A perhaps minor point for attachment studies generally, but less minor where archaeology is concerned, is psychology's total lack of interest in the objects involved in object attachment. From the viewpoint of psychology, these objects are a means to an end, but are not of any interest in their own right. Yet from an archaeological perspective, the objects are the only direct evidence with which we can work. Without an understanding of how material culture is shaped and reshaped by our attachment to it, and how objects in turn shape the people making and using them, we do not have the full picture. Object attachment is a reflection of a relationship between people and objects, but psychology would make it seem as though only the people are important. Yet it may be interesting and useful here to use psychological approaches to gain further insights into the kinds of objects that people are attached to, and to consider whether there are any common characteristics. Psychological approaches have

not previously been used to analyse the objects themselves, so this presents a novel way of using psychological methods and theories.

Psychology often assumes that the mind is entirely internal and can be studied in isolation from its involvement with others (Ingold 2008, 79). As a result, psychology suffers from a rather narrow purview, hyper-focused on the individual at the expense of the world surrounding them. If we are to develop a better understanding of object attachment, we need to consider other methods with which to broaden this view.

Anthropology and ethnoarchaeology: a cross-cultural perspective

One way of broadening this view is to seek out an understanding of cross-cultural similarities or differences in object attachment. To do so, we need to look towards disciplines interested in humans outside of the narrow confines of WEIRD societies. Perhaps the most obvious disciplines are anthropology and ethnography, both of which are, like psychology, concerned with understanding humans today. Unlike psychology, these disciplines view human life on a broader scale, with more of an interest in the webs of relationships into which people are tied and less of an interest in the individual (Ingold 2008, 79), giving us a better insight into the social and cultural sides of object attachment.

With the inclusion of insights from anthropology and ethnography, we can begin to answer questions about how universal object attachment is, and the ways in which it varies within and between different human cultures, particularly non-Western, non-industrialised cultures. Studying cultures different from those included in the psychological side of this thesis will provide a more nuanced perspective on object attachment than is possible from psychology alone, by considering the experience of object attachment in non-Western societies, by considering the nature of their relationships with material culture, and by considering the objects themselves.

The use of anthropological and ethnographic evidence to answer archaeological questions is not new, and has even been labelled as its own subdiscipline: ethnoarchaeology (Cummings 2013, 7; Cunningham and McGeough 2018, 162; Marciniak and Yalman 2013, 4; Skibo 2009, 29). Ethnoarchaeology has been part of archaeology since the latter discipline's beginnings, and has the potential to broaden our minds to the full spectrum of human variation. As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, ethnoarchaeology is not without its detractors, who criticise ethnoarchaeology for certain methodological and theoretical flaws, in particular its tendency

to equate modern and prehistoric hunter-gatherers, and its attempts to develop universal laws of behaviour. Yet, for this thesis, ethnoarchaeology provides a new perspective on variation in object attachment, allowing us to consider how this behaviour is expressed (or is not expressed) in a broader range of social and cultural contexts than is generally considered in the psychological literature.

Ethnoarchaeology will not provide all of the answers, however. Both anthropology and ethnoarchaeology are still less interested in material culture than archaeology is, given their focus on people, cultures and the relationships between them. Psychology provides a basic framework, and ethnoarchaeology can develop this framework further, but to get at the heart of our relationship with attachment objects, we need to consider how we think about material culture as a whole, in order to understand what traces are left behind by our attachment to objects.

Archaeology: theories about materiality, and a testing ground for ideas

Archaeology, then, can also contribute towards this endeavour. Like anthropology and ethnography, archaeology is interested in a wide range of human societies, but it does so by relying more heavily on the study of material culture (Cummings 2013, 113–114). Archaeology has a broad range of theories and methods which can be used to better understand the nature of humans' connections with the objects around them. These insights will be invaluable if we are to understand the material element of object attachment – important here, as the objects involved in object attachment often seem to be easily forgotten by psychologists.

From an archaeological perspective, if we want to understand emotional experiences like object attachment, the most fruitful approach involves examining the actions and objects which result from it, as opposed to focusing on the feelings themselves (Harris 2010). Such an approach would analyse how emotional experiences influence behaviour and actions, including how they are created, expressed and maintained in material forms (DeMarrais 2011). Material culture, whether it be rare objects or everyday items, can have strong emotional effects upon us, and it is unlikely that this is a modern development (Harris and Sørensen 2010, 148; Newell 2017). Considering the materiality of emotional experiences like object attachment, in particular the ways in which they become archaeologically visible, seems the most effective route to take.

This is important from an archaeological perspective, as material culture is often all we have to understand past societies. This is especially true for archaeologists studying periods with no written evidence whatsoever (periods commonly known as 'prehistoric', though this term is increasingly politically contentious) where we are generally entirely reliant on material evidence. In my own period of interest, the Upper Palaeolithic, we lack both written evidence and knowledge gained from cultural continuity, and are thus reliant on the material culture left behind. Archaeology offers us ways of thinking through how objects and people shape and reshape one another.

Archaeological methods and evidence also offer us a testing ground upon which to reanalyse material culture and test the ideas developed from the psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches. If we are to understand the experience of object attachment in the past, at some point this thesis will need to look towards the past. As such, the final part of this thesis will attempt to do so, helping us to think through how object attachment can help us reinterpret material culture and human life in the past, in a way that more fully humanises the people who lived then. With insights from archaeology, it becomes easier to understand how objects take an active social and emotional role in our lives, and it becomes clear that psychology's ignorance of material culture is misguided.

The use of multiple disciplines, particularly disciplines with such different theoretical and methodological approaches to research, is not simple, but has the potential to guide us towards a deeper understanding of object attachment, and both the people and objects involved. Together, psychology and ethnoarchaeology can provide us with a means of understanding the experience of object attachment in the present, while ethnoarchaeology and archaeology more broadly can provide us with ways of thinking beyond the rather narrow, Westernised view of attachment that remains so popular. Archaeology has a lot to offer, too, particularly by helping us to think through the role of material culture, and giving us a testing ground with which to consider how object attachment may have functioned in the past.

At no point is this thesis trying to identify or 'prove' the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record. Rather, it seeks to understand what object attachment is, how it varies, what this means for our understanding of the materiality of attachment, and how attachment objects may have shaped material culture and human life through time.

Aims of this research

As such, there are three main aims to this thesis.

To develop an understanding of object attachment and how it affects material culture

While psychology provides us with some basic answers, there is still a great deal that we do not understand about object attachment. Indeed, the psychological literature lacks even basic syntheses of current knowledge and evidence. Thus, the first aim of this thesis is to develop an understanding of object attachment and how it affects material culture. This will take the form of a review of current literature in psychology, ethnoarchaeology and archaeology more generally, which will allow me to consider both what we know and what we do not know about object attachment and the nature of our interactions with material culture.

To consider methodologies and approaches which might allow us to refine this understanding, and create expectations relating to the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record

To refine our understanding of object attachment, there are a number of key areas to be considered, particularly its causes, how it varies, and the ways in which it is materially expressed. Thus, the next aim of this thesis is to consider methodologies and approaches which may allow me to refine my understanding of object attachment, focusing here on psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches. The findings from these approaches will allow me to create expectations relating to the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record. These will take the form of statements outlining:

- The contexts in which we might expect to see object attachment in the archaeological record
- The potential behavioural effects of an increased attachment to objects
- What effects this might have upon material culture.

To evaluate these expectations using an archaeological case study

As the final portion of this thesis, I will test these expectations using an archaeological case study, to determine whether they are realistic, and whether they are archaeologically visible. This will allow me to reassess whether it is possible to seek out evidence of attachment in the

archaeological record, as well as giving insights into how an attachment perspective may shape our understanding of socio-emotional bonds with nonhuman beings, and the social and behavioural effects that this has.

The final stage of this project will focus on a specific case study: the Swabian Jura. This is a UNESCO World Heritage region in south-west Germany known best for a number of cave sites containing evidence of occupation from the Middle Palaeolithic all the way through to the historic period. It is well-known for its Aurignacian material culture, notably figurative art and musical instruments, which are some of the oldest in the world at more than 40,000 years old. As such, the Swabian Jura has been the subject of much interpretation, aided by yearly excavations which regularly encounter new evidence.

In this case study, I will consider patterns of symbolic material culture at four sites in the Swabian Jura, including potential changes in form, function, or the amount of material culture. These patterns will be analysed with reference to the social, ecological and climatic context of each specific site, the wider Swabian region, and the Aurignacian more generally. In evaluating these expectations, I will be able to consider what evidence is still missing, and whether an attachment perspective can be of use in archaeology beyond the narrow case study undertaken here.

Thesis structure

Reflecting the aims outlined above, this thesis has a tripartite structure.

Part 1: setting the scene

The first part of the thesis, including this chapter, introduces the topic and the intellectual background to this thesis, setting the scene for what comes next.

The following two chapters will more deeply consider many of the theoretical concerns discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 will start by outlining the psychological theory of attachment upon which this thesis is based. It will critically appraise what psychology can tell us about our attachments to objects, and what questions remain.

Chapter 3 will consider what anthropology and archaeology can contribute to our understanding of object attachment, focusing on the different theories, ideas and methods that these disciplines have used to understand material culture. It will consider the difficulties

inherent in studying object attachment from these perspectives and, again, what questions remain to be answered. Part 1 of this thesis will thus allow me to compare and contrast the different disciplines upon which this project stands, critically appraising them to see where I stand.

Part 2: primary research

The middle part of this thesis comprises the primary research undertaken to develop our understanding of object attachment further. This thesis is partially in the form of journal articles, which is reflected in its structure. Chapter 4 takes the form of a 'mini-chapter', introducing the aims and methods of the psychological research undertaken as part of this thesis, and considering their limitations. This leads us to Chapter 5, which takes the form of a journal article which has been submitted to the *Journal of Material Culture* for review, entitled 'The role of cherished objects as attachment figures'. It will draw upon three studies I carried out for this thesis, which look into the experience of object attachment, considering how these findings can further develop our understanding of what object attachment is, how it functions, and why certain objects are such effective sources of support.

The next two chapters follow the same form, with Chapter 6 taking the form of another 'mini-chapter' to outline the aims, methods and limitations of the ethnoarchaeological evidence. Chapter 7 takes the form of a journal article which will be submitted to the *Journal of Material Culture*, entitled 'An ethnoarchaeological approach to the study of object attachment'. It will consider the experience of object attachment in two Alaska Native nations, the Iñupiat and the Yup'ik, analysing their relationship with material culture and how this is related to their way of life and belief system.

Part 3: implications, testing and conclusions

This then takes us on to the third and final section of the thesis. Chapter 8 discusses the implications of the psychological and ethnoarchaeological findings for our understanding of object attachment. It seeks to provide answers to the questions of how object attachment varies and what characteristics attachment objects have, as well as how it differs from other kinds of material engagement. In doing so, this will allow me to develop expectations for the archaeological record for contexts in which object attachment may be more likely.

Chapter 9 tests these expectations through a detailed case study, focusing on four Aurignacian cave sites in the Swabian Jura. Focusing on figurative material culture found at these sites, I will discuss previous interpretations of these objects and provide context for the sites, the region, and the period as a whole. I will then discuss what is missing from previous interpretations, before using the expectations outlined in Chapter 8 to consider whether an attachment perspective can shed new light on the significance of the objects found in this technocomplex. Chapter 10 will conclude the thesis, considering how these findings may be used more broadly in archaeology, and outlining future areas for consideration.

Summary

Object attachment is far more ubiquitous than we often assume, and takes many forms. It might be a teddy bear that sits on your bed, a wedding ring on your finger, or a memento passed down through generations. It may make you feel happy and comforted, it may provide a reminder of good times, or it may even make you feel a little sad. Object attachment is so common that it is surprising that it has received so little attention, but this thesis aims to bring it to the forefront of how we think about our social and emotional lives and their connection to material culture.

In the next chapter, I will present and consider the psychological background to this thesis. This will go some way to fulfilling the first aim of this thesis – developing a basic understanding of object attachment – but will also throw up a number of questions for me to consider in more detail in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2

Intellectual Background: Attachment in Western Contexts

As we have already established, understanding object attachment cannot be achieved through a single discipline. The question remains, however: how exactly do we undertake an interdisciplinary approach to the study of object attachment? Understanding the nature of our socio-emotional relationships with objects is difficult, and archaeologists lack a clear framework with which to do so.

Psychology is clearly the first port of call for any understanding of object attachment, being the discipline from which the idea of attachment first originated. It makes sense, then, to consider here what we already know about object attachment, starting with one of the core theories in modern psychology: attachment theory.

In this chapter I will begin to discuss the intellectual background to this thesis, critically appraising what psychology can tell us about object attachment, particularly in Western contexts, and what questions remain unanswered. I will discuss the psychological theory of attachment, looking at how our 'attachment system' works, what effects our attachment relationships have upon us, and how this capacity has evolved. I will also critically appraise attachment theory, evaluating criticisms from within and outside attachment psychology. After this, I will turn to a more detailed discussion of humans' propensity for object

attachment, discussing how the human attachment system has come to encompass a broader range of attachment bonds than we see among other mammals.

This discussion and critique will allow me, in the final part of this chapter, to consider what psychology can tell us about object attachment, and what questions remain. While attachment research has, to date, largely been based in psychology, psychology has blind spots, in particular its lack of cross-cultural analyses and its ignorance of the objects involved. Yet by exploring what psychology can tell us, we can begin to gain an understanding of what we know, and where else it might be useful to look for answers to the questions that remain.

Understanding the basics: Attachment theory

As noted in the previous chapter, attachment theory is one of the most popular and well-known theories in developmental psychology (Cassidy and Shaver 2016, x; Fraley and Shaver 2021, 642; Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, vii). Developed in the mid-twentieth century by psychoanalyst John Bowlby, it originated as a way to understand the nature of infant-caregiver relationships and has since become so influential that it has been called “one of the greatest contributions to human well-being ever made by an evolutionary theorist”. Attachment theory is now supported by years of empirical study and clinical observations, and is widely used by psychologists and healthcare professionals to understand human relationships across the lifespan (Cassidy and Shaver 2016, x).

In short, attachment theory argues that we are born with an innate psychobiological attachment behavioural system which encourages us to seek proximity to others, particularly in times of need (Gillath, Karantzas and Lee 2019; Konok et al. 2016; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019, 16; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019, 65). This is not unique to humans; in fact, the attachment system is shared by all mammals (Feldman 2017, 80). This desire to seek proximity to others is a fundamental mammalian motivation, influencing our thought and behaviour from cradle to grave (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Seppala, Rossomando and Doty 2013, 413).

The individuals to whom we seek proximity, and from whom we elicit care, often become our ‘attachment figures’. In infancy, this is most often the infant’s primary caregiver or caregivers. Bowlby’s original research focused on attachment in infancy and childhood (Bowlby 1984; Bowlby 1988), but subsequent research has demonstrated the lifelong effects of the

attachment system. However, it took some years for psychologists to analyse the nature of adult attachment in any detail (Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 1). While in most other mammals, the only attachment relationships are between parents and offspring (Konok et al. 2016), humans can develop a wide variety of attachment relationships, from parents (and alloparents – anyone besides the biological parents who provides parental care to an infant), to friends, to romantic partners, even to our own children (Hrdy 2005). As a result, humans often develop broad networks of attachment figures through their lives.

The nature of attachment relationships in later life is contentious, as there is much disagreement between attachment scholars over what constitutes an attachment figure. There are two main camps: those who believe that the only true attachment relationship is that between an infant and their caregiver (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016, 917), and those who would extend the definition of ‘attachment figure’ to include multiple interpersonal relationships (such as romantic relationships) as well as broader nonhuman attachments (Howes and Spieker 2016, 314; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014). The former camp, who could be referred to as ‘attachment purists’, argue that relationships other than the original child-caregiver bond are ‘attachment-like’, rather than genuine attachment relationships (Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Walsh 2010, 449). Some attachment purists outright disparage the latter camp; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2016, 917) have stated that “serious attachment scholars are well aware of the dangers inherent in extending the theory beyond its valid limits” and noting that the word ‘attachment’ was an unfortunate choice as it is a word widely used to refer to a variety of relationships.

I do not agree with this purist position, however. Attachment relationships are, at their most basic, about fear avoidance and care-seeking (Walsh 2010, 449–450), and this criterion easily extends attachment relationships beyond child-caregiver relationships, to include romantic pair bonds, friendships, and even religious beliefs. Broadening our view of what counts as an attachment relationship does not mean weakening the significance of these attachments. The relationship that we have with a caregiver or with a romantic partner might be different in some ways, but in terms of attachment, they function psychologically and biologically in the same way. These relationships are not merely ‘attachment-like’; they are true attachment relationships in every sense. Interestingly, Granqvist himself appears to have revised his position in a more recent book, noting that ‘attachment-like’ was too vague a term; instead,

he now refers to God as a 'noncorporeal attachment figure' – but an attachment figure all the same (Granqvist 2020, 66, 352).

Many individuals will have one primary attachment figure within a larger network (Gillath, Karantzas and Lee 2019; Quinn and Mageo 2013, 19), but the identity of this primary attachment figure can change over the lifespan, as does the nature of this relationship. In childhood, our attachment bonds to caregivers are based upon the child receiving care and the adult giving it, while adult attachment bonds and caregiving are more reciprocal (Hazan, Campa and Gur-Yaish 2006; Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 1).

Nevertheless, the effect is the same throughout life. Proximity to attachment figures provides two major functions: a safe haven and a secure base (Figure 2.1). Attachment figures provide a safe haven by soothing and regulating emotions, particularly (but not exclusively) at times of distress, as well as a secure base, which encompasses guidance, support and encouragement, including the knowledge that there is support behind us, should we need it (Feeney and van Vleet 2010, 227; Gillath, Karantzas and Lee 2019, 21; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014, 525; Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz 2016). Over time, repeated interactions with our attachment figures, particularly during infancy, are instrumental in the development of our individual 'attachment style' (also referred to as an attachment orientation) (Gillath, Karantzas and Lee 2019; Gillath, Selcuk and Shaver 2008).

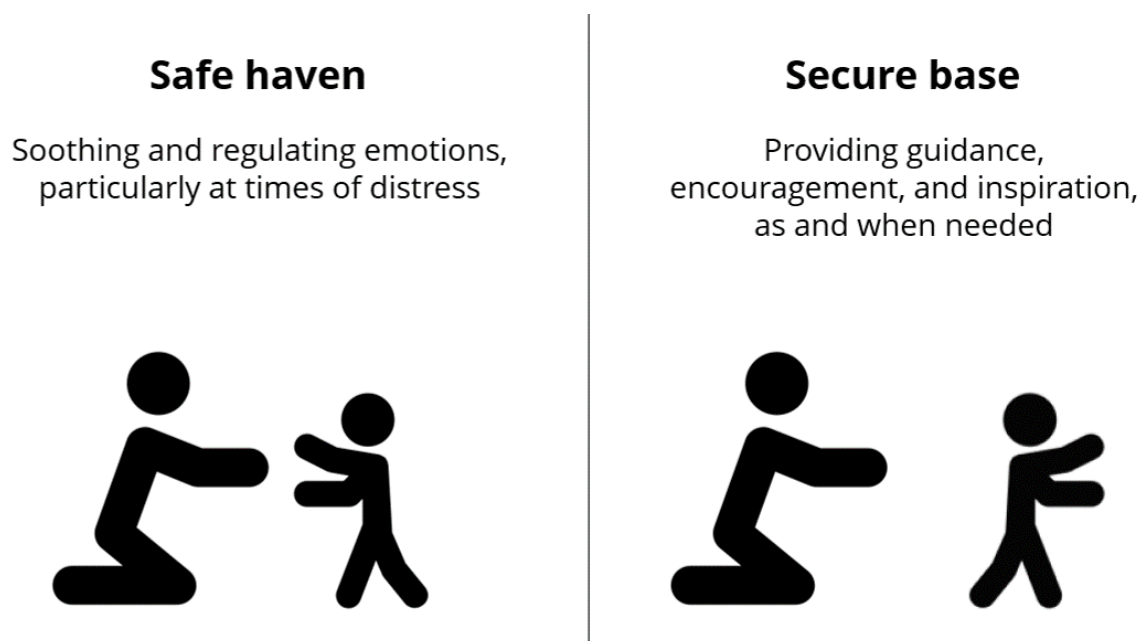


Figure 2.1: The two functions of attachment figures: a safe haven, and a secure base. Images based on original created by Jessica Lock.

Attachment styles

Our attachment style shapes our 'internal working model' of ourselves and others: in other words, our expectations, emotions and behaviours towards ourselves and other people (Beckes and Coan 2011, 980; Cassidy 2016, 7; Edelstein 2006, 340; Hewlett et al. 2000; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019).

There are in general four main attachment styles: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganised (Figure 2.2). Secure attachment usually results from having attachment figures who respond sensitively to one's attachment needs (Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz 2016), for example, by comforting them effectively during times of crisis or difficulty. This results in a positive working model of self and others; secure individuals believe others to be trustworthy, view themselves as having value, view the world as generally safe, and when faced with negative emotions, employ healthy emotion regulation strategies such as support-seeking and problem solving (Mikulincer and Shaver 2019; Oades-Sese and Li 2011; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019). While exact proportions are impossible to know, it is thought that around 60%

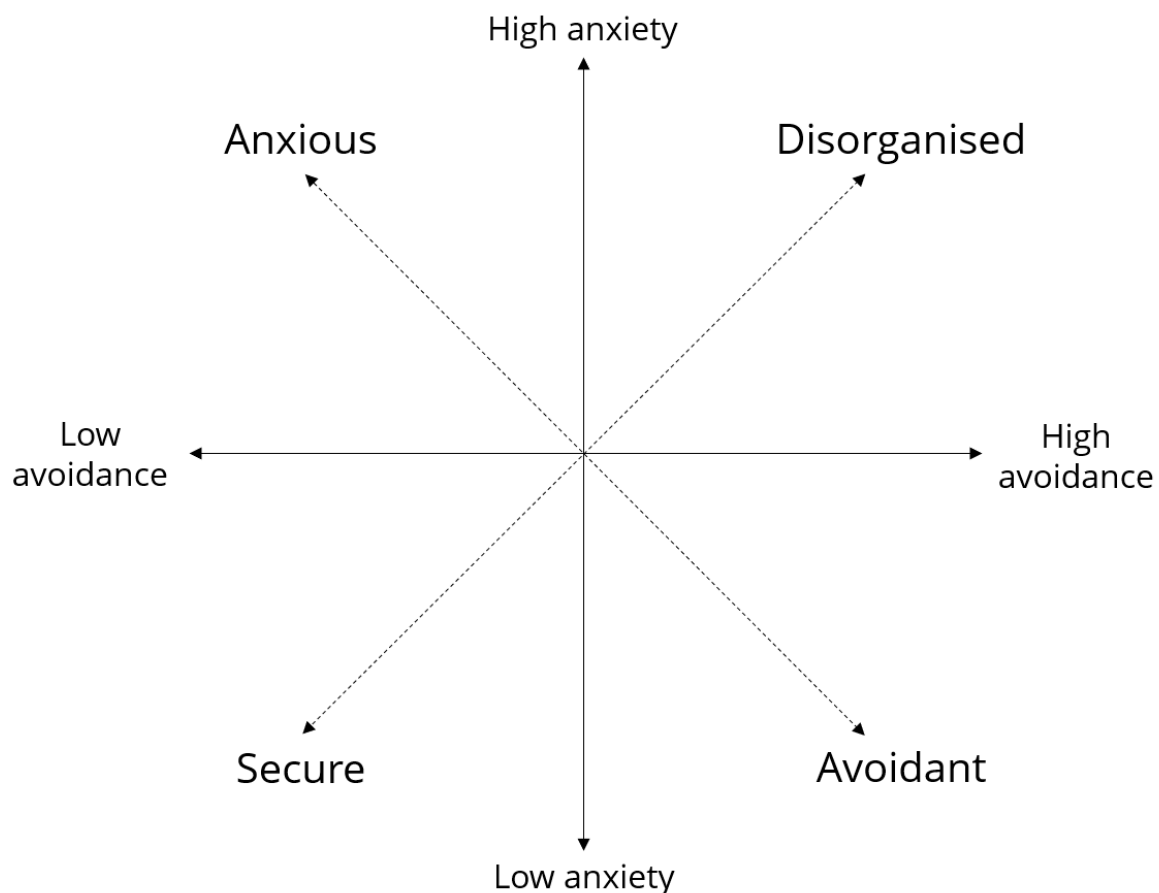


Figure 2.2: A dimensional representation of attachment styles.

of most populations are securely attached, a pattern that appears to hold up cross-culturally (Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2009; Hazan and Shaver 1987; Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 40).

The other three attachment styles, in contrast, are often referred to as insecure. The exact terms used to define these styles depend on whether the researchers are social psychologists or clinical practitioners (Coan 2016, 242), but attachment style is generally measured in relation to two main dimensions: avoidance and anxiety (Figure 2.2).

An anxious attachment style results from attachment figures who provided sporadic, unreliable care, or who were only responsive in the face of crises. In the case of an anxious infant, their caregiver may have responded only when the child became much louder about their needs – for example, screaming or crying – but did not respond to more subtle signs of need. Anxious individuals have a negative working model of self, worry that others will not be available in times of need, and have a hyperactivated attachment system (Konok et al. 2016; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019). This may be construed as needy behaviour, with the individual driven to compulsively seek out love and care.

An avoidant attachment style, on the other hand, appears to result from attachment figures who were unresponsive to an individual's attachment needs, or (in contrast to anxious individuals) were only responsive *outside* of crises. Avoidant individuals' experiences with others deactivate the attachment system and give them a negative working model of others. They distrust other people, strive for independence, and feel discomfort with emotional intimacy and commitment (Gillath, Selcuk and Shaver 2008; Konok et al. 2016; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019). This may be construed as standoffish behaviour, aimed at keeping others at arms' length.

From reading the literature on attachment, it is easy to assume that secure attachment is the optimal attachment style. Insecure attachment styles have been referred to as 'secondary behavioural strategies' in comparison (Main 1990). Yet this misunderstands the function of attachment styles. As Hewlett et al. (2000, 288) have noted, the terms 'secure' and 'insecure' are "culturally [here, read *Western*] biased constructions" in favour of secure attachment. Yet anxious and avoidant attachment styles are a response to the environment in which an infant grows up, and represent a way for the individual to seek out the care they need. An anxiously attached child may come across as needy because this is the optimal way of getting attention

and care from their caregivers. An avoidantly attached child may come across as indifferent to others, because they have learnt that depending on others is futile. Rather than seeing these styles as unhelpful, we must recognise that they are in fact adaptive, 'organised' strategies of coping, which help the child to survive in their environment (Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2007, 1160; Quinn and Mageo 2013, 13). Even secure attachment could be considered maladaptive in certain environments (Szepeswol and Simpson 2019), so we must be careful not to oversimplify by seeing secure and insecure attachment styles as universally 'good' and 'bad' (Ein-Dor and Hirschberger 2016; Quinn and Mageo 2013). Having individuals with a variety of attachment styles, and therefore different ways of responding to threats, may in fact have been beneficial to group survival in the past (Ein-Dor and Hirschberger 2016).

There is, however, another attachment style: disorganised attachment. Unlike the other attachment styles, this style of attachment does not appear to be adaptive, and results from extreme cases of trauma and neglect (Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Reisz, Duschinsky and Siegel 2018). In these cases, attachment behaviours become disorganised and contradictory, and the individual has a conflicted or apprehensive approach to caregivers (Reisz, Duschinsky and Siegel 2018, 112). From the literature, it is clear that disorganised attachment is still not fully understood, and more research is needed to understand how it originates and how it functions.

Attachment style is yet more complicated, however, because we must be careful not to assume that attachment styles are set in stone. The categorisation of attachment style means it is easy to assume that attachment style is a categorical measure, when attachment researchers are agreed that it is in fact dimensional (Harlow 2021, 3). If we look back to Figure 2.2, we see that attachment style can be more or less anxious, and more or less avoidant, rather than simply secure, anxious, avoidant or disorganised. We cannot fit the whole of humanity into four simple categories: the nature of attachment is more complex than this.

Attachment style even varies for every individual. We each have a general attachment style, but we can also have more specific orientations for different kinds of relationships, depending on our experiences in those relationships (Caron et al. 2012; Gentzler and Kerns 2006, 21; Imamoğlu and Imamoğlu 2006; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019). For instance, a person

might have a secure attachment style in their relationship with their parents, but an insecure attachment style in romantic relationships.

There has been some debate over the relative influence of genetic and cultural factors on attachment style. Cross-cultural research suggests that attachment style is a combination of a universal biological system, heavily influenced by culture, upbringing, and environment (Figure 2.3) (Belsky and van IJzendoorn 2017; Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz 2016; van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg 2019). While the attachment system is biological, individual and cultural contexts are key factors.

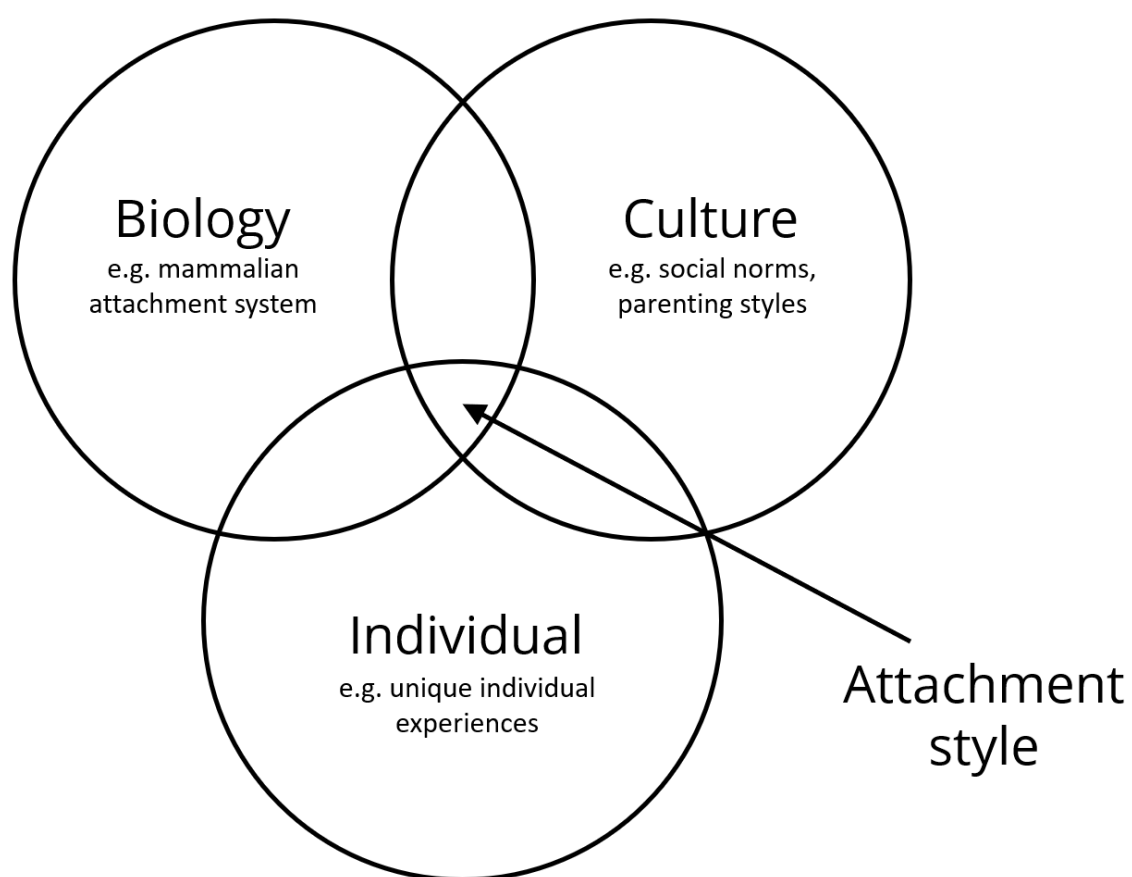


Figure 2.3: The different elements involved in every person's attachment style.

The effects of attachment

The attachment system has a wide variety of psychological and behavioural effects, many of which are interesting from an archaeological perspective. The sense of security provided by attachment figures is beneficial for the development and maintenance of good mental and physical health and wellbeing (Feldman 2017, 81). Secure individuals have higher self-esteem and a positive view of the world, giving them the confidence to seek out attachment figures

in a healthy and measured way. Insecure individuals, however, can struggle with lower levels of self-esteem and an increased tendency towards symptoms of depression, anxiety, and psychopathology (Oehler and Psouni 2018; Shaver et al. 2016, 897; Strathearn 2007, 194–195).

Emotion regulation

Throughout life, the safe haven provided by healthy attachment relationships helps to soothe distress, and an individual's sense of security can, over time, shape the way in which they feel, express and deal with emotions (Cassidy 2016, 7; Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010, 50; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016). Attachment seems to affect individual emotional competence; more securely attached people are better able to identify their emotions, use more appropriate and effective emotion regulation strategies, and are more resilient to mental and physical health risks, even in the face of adversity (Kerns and Brumariu 2016, 356–357; Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz 2016, 791; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016, 520, 2019, 6; Oehler and Psouni 2018). This leads to a lower risk of developing emotional psychopathologies (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016, 520). In short, secure attachment can help people to thrive socially and emotionally and practice healthy coping strategies (Feeney and van Vleet 2010; Komorowska-Pudło 2016), while insecure attachment has persistent negative effects on our ability to regulate emotion (Moutsiana et al. 2014).

(Pro)sociality

Given that the attachment system is based upon relationships with close others, that it affects our sociality is unsurprising. Secure individuals are more socially competent, more trusting, and more tolerant, can empathise with others more easily, provide more effective care, and are potentially more open to meeting and engaging with new people (Fearon et al. 2014; Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). A sense of attachment security, therefore, has a positive influence on a person's ability to notice and react appropriately to the needs of others (Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019).

Shaver et al. (2016, 878) have argued that attachment theory is, at heart, a theory of prosocial behaviour, tied as it is to the caregiving behavioural system. The care and attention we receive from attachment figures is vital for the optimal functioning of the attachment system. Those with an insecure attachment style may struggle to provide adequate care for others, as the caregiving behavioural system is inhibited by anxiety and self-concern, whereas secure individuals show greater empathy and compassion, and a greater willingness to help others

(Shaver et al. 2016, 879; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019, 17). Anxious individuals may want to help but struggle to do so without becoming personally distressed, and can be more focused on their own needs, while avoidant individuals are generally less empathic, less compassionate, and less willing to help others (Shaver et al. 2016, 900). This is not to say that insecure individuals cannot care; rather, their ability to care may be hindered.

Exploration

The secure base function of attachment figures also influences our ability to explore the world around us. Our attachment system is not just linked to the caregiving behavioural system, but also to the exploration behavioural system (Feeney and van Vleet 2010; Mikulincer, Shaver and Rom 2011). Exploration encompasses not just physical, environmental exploration, but the desire to learn, grow, discover, and accomplish goals (Feeney and van Vleet 2010, 227).

In a review of research related to both attachment and exploration, Feeney and Collins (2019, 182) noted that “unencumbered exploration occurs only when attachment needs are satisfied”. As such, secure individuals exhibit increased curiosity, cognitive openness, and exploratory behaviour (Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019). Conversely, Wu and Yang (2012) found that people with a high level of attachment avoidance and anxiety were less likely to engage in certain explorative behaviours, in the case of avoidant individuals, due to a lack of perceived social support, and in the case of anxious individuals, because of a lack of self-belief.

Having our attachment needs met is a crucial factor in encouraging exploration and discovery. When an attachment figure acts as a secure base, they can provide guidance and encouragement which can foster a sense of self-belief. This helps us to explore the world around us not just as children, but throughout life. A securely attached person has the confidence to go out into the world, try new things and step out of their comfort zone, safe in the knowledge that their attachment figure/s will be there, emotionally if not also physically, to provide support and reassurance.

Our attachment style can have far-reaching effects on both ourselves and our relationships with others. It shapes our ability to manage our emotions, influences how we deal with stressors and new situations, and can enable us to act more prosocially towards others. The attachment system, along with the caregiving and exploration behavioural systems, is a key influence upon human behaviour throughout life.

Evolution of the attachment system

Bowlby always conceived of the evolution of the attachment system as a means of increasing adaptiveness and therefore survival. However, as Belsky (2005, 90) has noted, evolutionary strategies are less about survival and more about optimising reproductive strategies. The question we have, then, is *how* the attachment system optimises these strategies.

The attachment behavioural system likely evolved in mammals because it increased their inclusive fitness (the number of children that an individual helps to bring up, regardless of whether or not they are the biological parent) (Shaver et al. 2016, 879). Hrdy (2005) has discussed the attachment system in relation to the development of alloparenting, and indeed there does appear to be a link between primates who breed cooperatively, and more complex socio-cognitive abilities. However, the attachment system is unusually broad in humans, which leads us to the question of *why*.

Bowlby believed that this broader attachment system developed in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies, an environment that he termed 'the environment of evolutionary adaptedness' (Bowlby 1984; Hewlett and Lamb 2005). Our attachments during infancy lead us to seek out attachment figures in response to threat or at times of need, improving our chances of physiological survival (Coan 2016; Ein-Dor and Hirschberger 2016). Unlike imprinting (seen most clearly in birds), the attachment system allows for the possibility of becoming attached to anyone who gives us care (Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 57), making the attachment system very flexible.

In his evolutionary imagining of attachment theory, Belsky (2005, 91) argued in more detail for the benefits of different attachment styles, proposing that the attachment system developed as a way for infants to gain contextual information about the wider environment, such as prevailing social conditions and potential environmental pressures. In this sense, early experiences act as a bellwether for later experiences, allowing infants to form expectations for future interactions and relationships, and predicting optimal behaviours within that environment. Again, this means that insecure attachment styles are not suboptimal, but function as an adaptive response to one's environment.

It is easy, then, to understand why, on an evolutionary scale, the attachment system has been so strongly selected for in infancy. Yet it is less clear why the human attachment system continues to function throughout life, while it appears to 'switch off' after childhood in other

mammals (Fraley, Brumbaugh and Marks 2005). Some authors have suggested that the attachment system has been 'co-opted' by natural selection to serve other functions such as pair bonding and child rearing (Coan 2010, 212; Fraley, Brumbaugh and Marks 2005; Hazan and Zeifman 1999; Konok et al. 2016, 537), while Szepeswol and Simpson (2019) simply see it as an adaptation which increases fitness in all environments, throughout life. While these are valid arguments, I would argue that another primary function of the attachment system in adulthood is that of aiding not just physiological survival, but social and emotional survival, too. It motivates individuals to maintain close interpersonal relationships which are integral to our emotional, mental, and physical health. In turn, this allows individuals to be optimal caregivers for their own kin, and increases their ability to explore their environment and try new things, all of which improve group survival. There is always the possibility, however, that the adult continuation of the attachment system was not specifically selected *for*, but was simply never selected *against*.

No matter how they evolved, our socio-emotional attachments are significant and meaningful throughout life. Given the attachment system's long biological history, it is extremely unlikely that this is a recent evolution, and so will have been shared by the entire *Homo* genus, and likely many of the species prior to *Homo*. It is this universal factor which may make it a valuable subject for archaeologists wishing to understand human thought and behaviour.

Criticism and debate within attachment theory

Nevertheless, while backed up by years of evidence, attachment theory is not without criticism.

Attachment nomenclature

As has already been discussed in this chapter, there is a clear semantic split between attachment purists and those who believe attachment relationships can be defined more broadly. However, there are other, broader criticisms that could be levelled at attachment nomenclature, regarding differences in the way that interpersonal relationships are defined, and differences in the way that insecure attachment is defined.

Seppala et al. (2013, 413) have noted variation in the language used by different subdisciplines within psychology to describe interpersonal relationships, which they themselves refer to as 'social connection'. Developmental psychologists use the term 'attachment', clinical

psychologists and sociologists talk about ‘social support’, and social psychologists use the terms ‘belongingness’ and ‘social connectedness’, yet all refer to the same broad area. This has the unfortunate effect of making research papers focused on similar topics, difficult to find unless researchers know exactly what they are looking for. Researchers with different backgrounds use different terms to refer to attachment-related research, sometimes without using the word ‘attachment’ at all. This has a knock-on effect, too, on the methods used, with clinical psychologists using more objective (and restrictive) measures such as the Adult Attachment Interview while social psychologists use more subjective self-report measures (Keller 2021a). With nomenclature and methods differing, it is no wonder that the attachment literature can lack cohesion, with subdisciplines of psychology acting in almost total separation from one another.

There are also issues regarding the way that insecure attachment styles are defined. Prior et al. (in prep) have noted the confusing nature of attachment classification systems. There are two systems used to describe attachment styles: the ABC-D classificatory system, first developed by Ainsworth and later modified to include a Disorganised category, and the Dynamic-Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM) (Table 2.1). Classifying any individual into a particular category is fraught with difficulty, and the systems noted here include a number of sub-categories (Prior et al. in prep). The two models yield different outcomes, and are not easily compared, which is problematic for those using these systems in practice, as well as for those trying to compare different studies.

ABC-D		DMM	
A	Anxious-avoidant insecure	A	Inhibited/compulsive
B	Secure	B	Secure
C	Anxious-resistant insecure	C	Ambivalent/coercive
D	Disorganised/disoriented	AC	Psychopathy

Table 2.1: A brief comparison of the ABC-D and DMM classificatory systems (based on Prior et al. in prep).

Prior et al. (in prep) have also stated that the word ‘anxious’ can be used to describe any insecure attachment. Yet, within the context of this thesis, ‘anxious’ refers only to those who are insecure resistant/ambivalent (according to the ABC-D model), not insecure avoidant – those who are insecure avoidant are referred to simply as avoidant.

This thesis uses a simplified version of the ABC-D model, referring to attachment styles as secure or insecure, and for insecure styles specifically, anxious, avoidant, and disorganised. This is, in my opinion, the simplest and most accessible way to define attachment styles, and avoids the confusion of referring to all insecure styles as anxious.

Differential influence of particular causal factors

Beyond nomenclature, there is also debate over the influence of the factors shaping attachment style. Perhaps the biggest debate has been over the focus that attachment theory places on parenting above all other factors. This is not surprising, given that attachment theory originated as a way of understanding infant-caregiver relationships, yet criticism has been levelled at attachment theory for its tendency towards 'mother-blaming', in spite of the fact that even Bowlby acknowledged the role of alloparents (Keller 2021b, 43–44; Quinn and Mageo 2013, 19).

There has been debate as to whether parenting is the most significant determining factor of attachment style in an individual's lifetime, and how malleable attachment style is in later life (Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2007; Fonagy 2003; Fraley and Roisman 2019). Longitudinal studies suggest that parenting has a much stronger influence in infancy and childhood, with more limited continuity in later life (Erkoreka et al. 2021; Fearon et al. 2014, 1034; Fraley and Roisman 2019). There is also the concept of 'lawful discontinuity', where an individual might see change to their attachment style and even their self-view over time (Carnelley and Rowe 2007, 316). A secure, loving, and supportive romantic relationship may prime an individual with a sense of security, and over time lessen their level of insecurity. Modern attachment theory is more interested in sensitive periods of development rather than attributing attachment style squarely to parental influence, and it is now understood that attachment style is the result of both early and ongoing experiences (Belsky 2005, 85; Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 34). Attachment style is not set in stone from an early age, but is capable of changing throughout life.

Another significant source of debate is the degree to which genetics determine attachment style. Interestingly, genetic influences appear to have a significant impact during adolescence and adulthood, but less so during infancy (Erkoreka et al. 2021; Fearon et al. 2014; Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015, 53). Attachment style does appear to show intergenerational transmission to a certain extent, though the existence of a 'transmission

gap' – unexplained variance in infant attachment security – has also been highlighted (Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2007).

One significant problem in studying genetic influences on attachment is the fact that, for most infants, their primary caregiver is also a genetic relation (Brussoni et al. 2000, 283), and as such, a parent may be both a genetic and an environmental influence. The relationship between genes and the environment has been the source of much study, with two recent review articles concluding that attachment style is the result of both genes and the environment, though genetic influences increase over time while environmental influences decrease (Erkoreka et al. 2021; Picardi, Giuliani and Gigantesco 2020).

Belsky's differential susceptibility hypothesis suggests that some individuals are simply more or less susceptible to developing an insecure attachment style (Belsky and van IJzendoorn 2017; Hartman and Belsky 2016). The genetic evidence supports this, and even extends this idea further. Certain genes and alleles appear to increase susceptibility to attachment insecurity *and* security depending on the quality of the environment (Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2007; Erkoreka et al. 2021; Picardi, Giuliani and Gigantesco 2020). In other words, certain genes increase susceptibility to secure attachment in supportive environments, and susceptibility to insecure attachment in unsupportive environments. However, the literature is broadly agreed at present that far more research needs to be undertaken, particularly into gene-environment interactions, if we are to fully understand the mechanisms behind attachment style (Erkoreka et al. 2021, 539; Picardi, Giuliani and Gigantesco 2020).

Ethnocentrism

Perhaps the most important criticism of attachment theory is its ethnocentrism, an issue which plagues psychology as a discipline. As noted in Chapter 1, one of psychology's major methodological weaknesses is its overreliance on WEIRD participants. WEIRD individuals are thought to constitute around 12% of the world's population (Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010a, 2010b), but most quantitative psychological research is undertaken using this group of people (Clancy and Davis 2019, 170–171; Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010b).

Questions have rightly been asked about the validity of psychological research based on a group that constitutes less than one eighth of the world's population, with Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010b, 66) going so far as to say that "members of WEIRD societies, including

young children, are among the least representative populations one could find for generalizing about humans". In a sense, WEIRD participants *are* weird, compared to humans as a whole. Psychologists increasingly recognise the inherent bias caused by their reliance upon WEIRD societies, and the need to develop more interdisciplinary and non-Western methods of doing research (Clancy and Davis 2019).

In attachment research more specifically, the often Westerncentric focus of attachment theory has been the subject of sustained critique (Keller 2021b, 5; Quinn and Mageo 2013, 3). Studies in Germany and Japan have illustrated how differences in parenting style and cultural norms – ‘pathways of enculturation’ – affect both attachment style and the way attachment is perceived. In Germany, for example, higher proportions of children are classed as avoidant, but this is construed in German culture as positive traits of independence and self-reliance which match wider cultural preferences or ‘cultural models of virtue’ (LeVine and Norman 2001, 84). In Japan, in contrast, parenting involves high levels of infant-caregiver proximity, resulting in higher proportions of anxiously attached children and extremely low proportions of avoidant attachment (Quinn and Mageo 2013, 14). This matches wider cultural preferences in Japan against avoidant behaviour. In both examples, while the children may be technically classified as insecure, their culture would not view this as a negative. Again, we come back to the realisation that secure attachment is not the optimal style in all cultures and environments. Attachment has to be considered in the context of local and cultural norms, and must embrace individual and environmental variation (Morelli and Henry 2013, 248; Quinn and Mageo 2013, 25). There is no simple ‘one size fits all’ approach to attachment theory (Keller 2021b, 5).

Interestingly, though, culture does not account for all patterns of attachment style. There appear to be similar distributions of attachment styles in many different countries and cultures, and in some cases differences between countries are smaller than differences within countries (Wilkins, Shemmings and Shemmings 2015). Similarly, Coard (2021, 2) has noted that research on attachment has been carried out almost entirely separately from research on race and racism, and has criticised the resultant ‘glossing over’ of intracultural factors such as race in attachment style and attachment behaviour. One of attachment theory’s central ideas is that context is critical, but despite this attachment research has had an overarching emphasis on universality (Coard 2021, 2). This has had genuinely harmful impacts in some cases, with ethnocentric views of attachment being used as justification to take children away

from their biological parents and place them in foster care (Keller 2021b, 148). The more we look at attachment styles, however, the more complicated they become – the result of a complex web of biological, cultural, and individual factors.

Attachment theory is complicated, and has been the subject of much critique. Yet much of this critique is not criticising the basic tenets of the theory itself but, rather, aspects of how the theory has been used in the past (Quinn and Mageo 2013), many of which have been improved upon in recent years. In particular, there is increasing recognition that Westerncentric views of secure attachment as optimal and any other style as sub optimal are not realistic, and ignore cultural differences in pathways of enculturation (Coard 2021). Attachment theory will no doubt continue to develop as further research, particularly longitudinal studies, is undertaken in a wider variety of cultures.

Understanding the basics: Object attachment

Now that we understand attachment theory on a basic level, we can begin to ask pertinent questions about what psychology can tell us about our attachment to objects.

Nonhuman attachments

Attachment relationships are, interestingly, not restricted to interpersonal relationships. Humans in particular exhibit a particularly broad capacity for attachment. Research has demonstrated, for example, the positive effects of companion animals (Bagley and Gonsman 2005; Beck and Madresh 2008; Kurdek 2008, 2009; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer and Shaver 2011, 2012; Zasloff and Kidd 1994), places (Hernández et al. 2007; Scannell and Gifford 2017), and deities (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016; Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Kirkpatrick 1998) as sources of attachment security, perhaps even as attachment figures in their own right. Even social media has been shown to act as a kind of ‘social surrogate’ (Derrick, Keefer and Troisi 2019).

We can even become attached to inanimate objects. Objects encourage attachment in a number of ways: by providing a sense of belonging, by structuring and consolidating our sense of self, or by making us want to care for them (Bardhi, Eckhardt and Arnould 2012; Bell and Spikins 2018). This thesis, however, will focus specifically on emotional attachments to objects as seen through the framework of Bowlby’s attachment theory. As discussed previously, some attachment researchers would not consider object attachment to be a true

attachment relationship – rather, they would consider it *attachment-like* – yet I believe that attachment objects can reasonably be referred to as attachment figures. These objects provide us a safe haven from fear, and provide us with care, albeit not directly or knowingly. In turn, we often care for them.

Object attachment in childhood

The capacity for object attachment begins at a young age. Given that attachment theory originated as a means for developmental psychologists to understand infant-caregiver relationships, it is unsurprising that we know more about object attachment in childhood than we do for any other period of life. Psychologist Douglas Winnicott (1953) was the first to discuss object attachment in childhood and infancy, referring to such objects as ‘transitional objects’. This term describes objects used by young children, particularly during the period immediately after weaning, to ‘fill the gap’ left by the relative separation from their mother (Erkolahti et al. 2016, 536; Hood 2019; Winnicott 1953). Object attachment throughout childhood is today accepted as a normal, healthy phase of childhood development, and can encourage attachment security by providing a stable attachment figure, particularly when children are stressed, vulnerable or in unfamiliar environments (Fortuna et al. 2014; Litt 1981, 131–132).

Not all children have a transitional object, however. Cross-cultural studies have demonstrated cultural and socio-economic differences in the expression of object attachment (Fortuna et al. 2014, 2; Lee and Hood 2021, 72; Litt 1981). Multiple studies show that they are more commonly found in cultures in which children sleep alone, or have a room of their own, from an earlier age (Gaddini and Gaddini 1970; Hong and Townes 1976; Litt 1981, 138). It is estimated about 60% of children from Western cultures have some kind of transitional object (Hood 2019, 62), but they are more commonly found in cultures which heavily value individuality and independence; children from cultures with more communal values are less likely to use transitional objects (Bachar et al. 1998). Cultures with more communal values often have parenting styles which involve more physical proximity between parents and children (Bachar et al. 1998); therefore, children from these cultures seem to have less need for attachment objects, as their primary attachment figures are close at hand. This is not to infer that transitional objects are a sign of poor parenting or unhappiness in children; rather,

their use demonstrates the plasticity of the human attachment system, and its ability to adapt to change.

Even within cultures we see a certain degree of difference in the use of transitional objects. Fortuna et al. (2014) undertook a twin study and found that object attachment is mediated not just by our environment, but by our genetics, too. Again, the attachment system is incredibly plastic, and prone to change.

Object attachment in adulthood

While object attachment is widely recognised as a healthy part of childhood, there is a continued stigma towards the use of attachment objects in adulthood, represented in the literature as an uncertainty as to whether their continued use is healthy or not (Lee and Hood 2021, 74). Among the public, there seems to be a perception that being attached to an object means that we are either too childish or too materialistic. When object attachment does receive attention from psychologists, it is often in a negative context, reflecting the general misconception that object attachment in adulthood is a sign of pathology (Konok et al. 2016, 538). There is much interest in studies of maladaptive relationships with material cultures such as hoarding and addiction (Kings, Moulding and Knight 2017; Konok et al. 2016; Neave et al. 2016), as well as studies of people with conditions such as borderline personality disorder and dementia (Hooley and Wilson-Murphy 2012; Stephens, Cheston and Gleeson 2013). This overwhelming focus on its maladaptive aspects is in spite of the fact that an increasing number of psychological studies demonstrate that object attachment is indeed a normal and healthy part of the adult attachment behavioural system (Konok et al. 2016; Timpano and Port 2021, 110; Wapner, Demick and Redondo 1990) and worthy of further study.

Lucas Keefer is of particular note here, having undertaken a number of interesting studies which suggest that object attachment in adulthood, as in childhood, is often a reaction to feelings of insecurity and uncertainty (Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer and Rothschild 2020). Research suggests a positive correlation between anxious attachment and attachment to objects (Keefer et al. 2012; Kings, Moulding and Knight 2017; Neave et al. 2016). Keefer et al. (2012) have thus linked object attachment explicitly to the insecurity caused by a lack of interpersonal support. However, insecurity comes in many forms, and we might wonder whether other types of insecurity (for example, ecological or financial) also increase the propensity for object attachment throughout life.

The neurobiology of object attachment

Taking a more neuroscientific approach to object attachment provides an interesting addition to the psychological evidence, though there is some way to go before we can speak of the neural underpinnings of the attachment system with confidence. The neurobiological basis of attachment is complicated. At its most basic, attachment is the evolutionary mechanism which leads us to seek close contact with others to maintain homeostasis (Schore and Schore 2010, 62). The biological systems necessary for attachment predate human cognition (Carter 2017, 500), and it requires several cognitive processes linking sensory and motor outputs, including attention, memory, social recognition, and motivation (Insel and Young 2001, 129). As yet, there have been no neurobiological studies specifically of object attachment. While recent years have seen a growing interest in such studies (Gander and Buchheim 2015, 10; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019, 18; Strathearn 2007, 202), this research overwhelmingly focuses on parent-infant, dyadic, or romantic pair bonds.

Surprisingly, we know more about the neuroscientific underpinnings of attachment in other animals than we do in humans, partly because human attachment is largely studied with reference to behavioural observations, interviews and self-reports (i.e., clinical measures) rather than the identification and study of neural structures (Coan 2016, 243–244). The apparent paucity of neuroscientific research into attachment may also be due to the inherent difficulty in pinning down a biological system with no simple neural or physiological correlate (Coan 2016, 242–244). You cannot dissect or x-ray a body and point to the attachment system. However, this point holds for most cognitive abilities generally (Wynn and Coolidge 2016, 203), so this does not entirely explain the paucity of research at present. Thankfully, we can look to nonhuman bonding relationships (such as those of monogamous mammalian species or those which practice cooperative breeding) to gain better insights into neural correlates of attachment.

Feldman (2017, 81) has noted that in comparison to other mammals, human attachment bonds are of increased complexity, flexibility, and breadth. During infancy, attachment experiences influence the development of the brain's limbic circuits, particularly during early sensitive periods (Asma and Gabriel 2019, 130; Schore and Schore 2010, 62). While other species are constrained in later life by the effects of these sensitive periods, the human attachment system enables both variability in attachment figures and 'repair' of the

attachment system later in life in response to earlier maladaptive relationships (Feldman 2017, 81). This should not be surprising for archaeologists interested in the evolution of the mind as it has previously been noted that the brain's plasticity may be one of the hallmarks of human cognitive evolution (Renfrew, Frith and Malafouris 2009, x).

If we take the most common-sense approach towards understanding the neurobiology of object attachment – looking at the neurobiology of attachment more generally - it appears likely that object attachment is a result of the co-option of existing neuroendocrinological systems involved in interpersonal attachment which are also closely linked to reproduction and survival (Carter 2017, 499). It may be helpful to consider areas associated with emotion such as the prefrontal cortex (PFC), limbic system, neuroendocrine systems such as the oxytocinergic and dopaminergic systems and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, as well as the autonomic nervous system (ANS) (Kostan and Snowden 2002, 132; Strathearn et al. 2009, 2655). Many of these regions and systems are interconnected, resulting in an extremely complex web of connections involved in attachment relationships and interactions (Coan 2016, 247–248). Different researchers focus on different areas, but the attachment system is likely to involve all of them.

One of the neurobiological constructs most often implicated in attachment is oxytocin (OT), often colloquially referred to as the 'love hormone'. OT is a peptide (protein) hormone and neuropeptide produced in the hypothalamus and released by the posterior pituitary. It can be released both within the brain and into the bloodstream, leading to a wide range of biological effects (Carter 2017, 501–502); this dual-purpose may have also given it some measure of evolutionary flexibility (Asma and Gabriel 2019, 4; Donaldson and Young 2008, 900). OT is released in response to both social stressors and social support, and plays a key role in the promotion of stronger social cognition and behaviour across a wide range of species, including social bonding, reproduction and affiliative behaviour, forming and strengthening social memories, and modulating anxiety, fear and emotion regulation (Carter 2017, 502; Cozolino 2014, 121; Heinrichs, von Dawans and Domes 2009, 553; Panksepp and Biven 2012, 303; Sable 2013, 94; Strathearn 2011, 1057–1058). Strathearn et al. (2009) refer to OT as a neurohormone of attachment, and studies suggest that there may be a link between OT and attachment security, with insecurely attached individuals showing lower levels of OT release and secure individuals benefitting from the buffering effects of increased OT levels (Buchheim et al. 2017, 2; Carter 2017, 509; Krahé et al. 2016). Evidence shows that

previously neglected children benefit less from comforting parenting behaviours, with a lack of brain-based OT spikes seen in other children (Asma and Gabriel 2019, 130; Wismer Fries et al. 2005, 17239). OT's ability to soothe anxiety, diminish separation distress, and facilitate homeostasis is well-known (Burkart and Finkenwirth 2015, 15; Carter 2017, 502; Feldman 2017, 82; Panksepp 2007, 149; Panksepp and Biven 2012, 325), with OT bolstering the immune system and lowering the production of stress hormones (Sable 2013, 94).

OT is similar to and works closely with another peptide hormone, vasopressin (VP), which is also implicated in bonding and attachment (Cozolino 2014, 54, 122). Carter (2017, 502–503) argues that while OT facilitates passive coping strategies, making us feel emotionally safe and able to relax, VP encourages active coping strategies. Receptors for both OT and VP are abundant in areas such as the amygdala, HPA axis and ANS, all of which regulate social, emotional, and adaptive behaviours (Carter 2017, 504). Together, OT and VP regulate attachment and bonding, regulating the autonomic nervous system, particularly during stress, and affecting the immune and metabolic systems (Carter 2017, 506–507). In the study of children mentioned above, baseline VP levels were lower in previously neglected children, suggesting that social neglect has an inhibitory effect on the VP system (Wismer Fries et al. 2005, 17239).

Pearce et al. (2017, 5303) have criticised neuroscience's focus on OT, arguing instead for the more prominent role of neuropeptides like endorphins and dopamine (DP), noting the role of β -endorphin in the creation and upkeep of social relationships (Pearce et al. 2017, 5303). Furthermore, OT can actually have negative effects on trust, tolerance and cooperation in certain contexts (Asma and Gabriel 2019, 130; Ne'eman et al. 2016; Zhang et al. 2019). However, OT and DP are closely linked, with OT activating dopaminergic reward pathways in social situations, the latter of which serve as a reward-reinforcement tool (Insel and Young 2001, 135; Strathearn 2011, 1057–1058). DP gives the motivation to maintain bonds, while OT soothes and reduces anxiety (Feldman 2017, 82). Pearce et al. (2017, 5303) have also suggested that, rather than OT, the opioid system might be the primary mechanism. Panksepp (2007, 153) argued that social attachments have both opioid and oxytocinergic elements, with OT extending the opioid-induced pleasure of social relationships.

As is often the case, trying to attribute everything to one factor is unrealistic. When we have positive social interactions with attachment figures, both opioids and OT are released,

perhaps by the HPA axis (Asma and Gabriel 2019, 130; Zeifman and Hazan 2016, 421), which in turn may activate the dopaminergic reward system (Strathearn 2011, 1057–1058), reinforcing the association between attachment figures and positive feelings.

Attachment stressors (such as stressful situations, or feelings of loneliness or insecurity) activate the attachment system, releasing OT and VP which lead individuals to use coping strategies (Oberschneider et al. 2017) like proximity-seeking behaviour, such as a child running towards a caregiver. However, exactly how this works from a biological basis is unclear. It may be the result of a stress-related response involving OT and the stress hormone cortisol, but previous research into this area has not given a clear answer (Oberschneider et al. 2017). It may be that attachment style dictates an individual's neurobiological response to attachment stressors (Krause et al. 2016, 2), with higher levels of OT release and lower levels of cortisol enabling secure individuals to self-regulate negative attachment-related emotions more easily. Insecure individuals demonstrate biological responses which negatively impact the body's ability to regulate emotion (Gander and Buchheim 2015, 10; Krause et al. 2016, 2).

However, the plasticity of the attachment system means that humans can employ alternative coping strategies when faced with insecurity, whether temporary or more long-term. Secure attachment relationships facilitate a buffering response to stress (Gander and Buchheim 2015, 10). Attachment relationships are more than just a safe haven and secure base; early attachment relationships provide the means through which humans learn to self-regulate their emotions and relationships throughout life (Schore and Schore 2010, 71). This does not mean that attachment figures are not needed in later life; even securely attached individuals cannot self-regulate indefinitely, as this is mentally taxing (Coan 2010, 214). Attachment figures are an additional, helpful way to gain support, requiring less of our own, costly self-regulatory abilities, allowing us to conserve our neural resources (Coan 2010, 214). Thus, we come to rely both on our own self-regulatory abilities, and regulation by attachment figures (Schore and Schore 2010, 61).

With all of this in mind, it is possible to tentatively put forward a simple neurobiological model of object attachment. In the case of object attachment, an individual may become attached to an object, perhaps because of its association with a loved one, happy event or significant memory. Interactions with the attachment object facilitate the release of OT and DP, which in combination cause the individual to associate the object with positive feelings, lower stress,

and increased attachment security. Thus, when an individual feels insecure, and other individuals are unhelpful or unavailable, they can use their attachment object as a healthy alternative coping strategy.

More research is required to better understand human responses to attachment objects. I undertook a pilot study in 2016 which suggested that the presence of an attachment object attenuates stress responses in the ANS (as measured by heart rate variability) during a stressful situation (Bell 2016); nevertheless, this study had a small sample size ($n = 20$), and more comprehensive research is required. Unfortunately, such a lack of research is not unique to object attachment; attachment has received little direct neuroscientific study, with much of the literature still speculative.

Yet, neurobiology has contributed much to our understanding of how we should think about the nature of attachment relationships. While Western medicine has had a historic tendency to treat the human brain as an individual, the neuroscientific literature is clear: we are wired to be social animals (Cozolino 2014, xvi; Feldman 2017, 84). The neuroscientific literature continually emphasizes the roles of both sociality and emotion in human development, including the development of the attachment system (Beckes and Coan 2011; Coan and Sbarra 2015; Okon-Singer et al. 2015; Schore 2003, 25). However, as with much research into emotion, neuroscience has reached little agreement over the best methods to investigate it (Gage and Baars 2018, 358), and to what degree attachment is the result of biological or cultural factors (Perry, Blair and Sullivan 2017, 1). Neuroscientific research suggests an innate attachment system shaped by environmental factors such as upbringing and culture (Perry, Blair and Sullivan 2017, 1; Schore 2003, 24).

The neural circuits involved in social bonding are, in Coan's (2010, 211) words, "virtually inextricable" from those related to other kinds of emotional responses. The attachment system is well-recognised in neuroscience as being heavily involved in emotion regulation (Gander and Buchheim 2015, 1; Schore 2003, 34), particularly self-regulation later in life. This has major implications for resilience to stress and adversity, with secure attachment and social support having a buffering effect at times of stress, shown by attenuated stress-related activity in the ANS and HPA axis (in the latter, shown by reduced cortisol levels), increased OT levels and more flexible prefrontal mechanisms (Coan 2016, 242; Gander and Buchheim 2015, 10; Ziegler and Crockford 2017, 113). In contrast, insecure attachment shows heightened

neural activity and physiological reactivity to stress (Coan 2016, 255; Gander and Buchheim 2015, 10). Prolonged periods of stress can impair the HPA axis' stress response, leading to negative effects on health and on neural regions involved in emotion and emotion regulation (Perry, Blair and Sullivan 2017, 4; Ziegler and Crockford 2017, 111). Adaptations to stress such as object attachment may potentially have wide-ranging and positive effects on emotion regulation.

Neuroscientists have noted that social and emotional processes in the brain are deeply intertwined, with a great deal of overlap between the neural circuits involved in social and emotional processes (Coan 2010, 212; Panksepp 2007, 145). Of particular interest to this thesis, and to attachment theory generally, is Social Baseline Theory (SBT), which hypothesizes that one of the human brain's assumptions is that of social proximity, and that this is used as a baseline affect regulation strategy (Beckes and Coan 2011; Coan 2010; Coan and Sbarra 2015). In simpler terms, SBT states that humans use social support as a way to regulate their emotions and this reduces the actual and perceived cost of engagement with the environment, making us more capable of dealing with environmental demands (Beckes and Coan 2011, 978; Coan 2016, 242, 256; Coan and Sbarra 2015, 89). In this light, attachment relationships are extremely beneficial, giving us a sense of security through risk distribution, load sharing and a reduction in threat vigilance. Significantly, Beckes and Coan state that if this theory is correct, "attachment-like adaptations likely extend beyond romantic and parent-child relationships to include many other types of relationships" (2011, 982-983). The neurobiological mechanisms involved in attachment allow infants to bond with multiple caregivers (Perry, Blair and Sullivan 2017, 2-3) and this plasticity is likely to have been a major driver in the development of the attachment system, including the capacity to become attached to objects. Object attachment may be particularly beneficial in insecure circumstances in which social support is less easily available, as they provide not only support, but reminders of interpersonal relationships and other attachment figures.

Evolutionary pathways of object attachment

The evolution of our extended capacity for attachment is still the focus of debate. Konok et al. (2016, 542) have suggested that object attachment is the result of the "cultural co-option" of the attachment system. This suggests that, like attachment generally, contextual factors

such as upbringing and cultural norms may be influential in the expression of object attachment.

There is also tentative evidence suggesting that object attachment is not unique to humans. A paper by Kahlenberg and Wrangham (2010), based on observations of chimpanzees in Kibale National Park, showed juvenile chimpanzees, particularly females, to be engaging with sticks in a manner reminiscent of a mother and infant. The sticks were carried around and cradled by juveniles, perhaps as a way of practising caregiving. There is no suggestion that the chimpanzees were attached to these sticks – the longest period a stick was carried was only a few hours – but these observations do suggest that there is some capacity to care for objects in the way humans might care for an attachment object. There is also anecdotal evidence of some human-reared primates demonstrating attachment to specific objects, such as Harlow's infamous experiments with infant rhesus monkeys who became attached to inanimate surrogate mothers made of cloth and wire (Harlow 1958; Harlow and Suomi 1970), as well as a human-reared chimpanzee becoming attached to books from his past, including a book with pictures of him and his handlers (Hess 2008), although again these potentially strengthen the argument for the role of contextual factors, given that these were human-reared primates taken out of their natural environment (Hood 2019). Interestingly, Hood (2019) has argued that this process of human rearing, particularly domestication, may be a major reason behind why dogs can become attached to objects, too. Perhaps there is something about our environment, or the way we live our lives, which causes object attachment to be expressed.

Object attachment thus seems unlikely to be a recent psychological innovation, so we should be open to the idea that we may see it in many different human contexts. However, as discussed earlier, object attachment is generally expressed in more insecure individuals or in insecure contexts. Therefore, from an archaeological perspective, it is necessary to consider the social and environmental context of sites and material culture to determine whether an attachment object would have been of use. Similar to today, prehistoric cultures would likely have demonstrated widespread variability in the expression of object attachment.

Nonetheless, we do not yet fully understand why the attachment system is particularly broad in humans. Even in our closest living nonhuman relatives, we do not see anywhere near the

level of object attachment seen in humans. It is likely that human plasticity enabled this capacity, but how and why this is, is a more difficult question.

Why are attachment objects effective?

Attachment objects are common sources of social support. This results from a number of interconnected factors.

Attachment objects often act as 'security primers'. Security priming is a cognitive technique in which a stimulus is used to trigger thoughts and memories of attachment figures, priming a person with a sense of security (Gillath and Karantzas 2019, 86). These stimuli can be either subliminal (unconscious) or supraliminal (conscious), such as showing people security-related words or pictures, or asking participants to recall loving and caring memories of attachment figures (Gillath and Karantzas 2019, 86). Participants who have been security primed show increased emotional wellbeing, positive affect and prosocial tendencies, decreased prejudice, fear and hostility towards outgroup members, and improved network management skills and self-view (Carnelley and Rowe 2007; Carnelley et al. 2018; Gillath and Karantzas 2019, 93; Oehler and Psouni 2018; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019; Stupica et al. 2019).

Over the last decade, a number of studies have demonstrated the security priming effects of attachment objects (e.g., Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Oehler and Psouni 2018). Interestingly, one study priming individuals with thoughts of loved ones' *unreliability* demonstrated an increase in both attachment anxiety and object attachment (Keefer et al. 2012). Some attachment objects appear to provide comfort and security as explicit reminders of loved ones – a study by Niemyjska and Parzuchowski (2018) found that some personal possessions made people feel as if a loved one was close, and were a particularly helpful way of recalling attachment-related memories or feelings. In turn, these objects may even encourage increased closeness in these relationships, showing how attachment objects are socially and emotionally entangled in our lives (Niemyjska and Parzuchowski 2018, 11).

In a review of the literature on object attachment and emotion regulation, Timpano and Port (2021) have noted the role that attachment objects play in regulating emotion, by upregulating positive affect or downregulating negative affect. They note that further research is required, as the specific mechanisms involved are unclear, although as noted earlier this may be related to biological responses involving certain hormones. Yet, the result

is clear: attachment objects help people to regulate their emotions, with a myriad of accompanying benefits.

The nature of attachment objects

Quite simply, then, what are attachment objects and how might we define them?

There have been numerous, differing definitions of object attachment and attachment objects. Table 2.2 shows the different definitions given in a single Special Issue of *Current Opinion in Psychology*. Most of these definitions are similar, with emotion, feeling, connection, and bonds all common themes. Definitions differ widely and often appear to depend on the purpose of the research at hand.

Definition	Reference
"...the emotional connection felt by an individual toward an object, such that a sense of loss may be felt if the individual parts with it."	David et al. (2021, 1)
"...a psychological feeling that individuals experience toward a digital or physical good that is inanimate but can be infused with human or godlike qualities."	Mead and Baumeister (2021, 16)
"...a psychological or emotional bond toward an object that is motivated by compensatory consumption."	Mandel, Lisjak and Wang (2021, 55)
"...the psychological or emotional bond that individuals experience between their sense of self and an object."	Norberg and Rucker (2021, vi)
"...the strength of the bond we feel with a special, significant item that triggers emotions and evokes positive and protective behaviours."	Preston and MacMillan-Ladd (2021, 31)

Table 2.2: Different definitions of object attachment.

My definition of an attachment object, however, is based on the criteria for attachment bonds listed by Ainsworth (1993) and Zeifman and Hazan (2016, 420–423) (Table 2.3). I define it as an inanimate object:

- Whose presence provides an individual with a sense of comfort and security
- Which is preferred by the individual over other objects
- Which the user chooses to rely upon for protection, or which they seek proximity to in times of need
- To which the user feels some degree of distress upon separation or loss.

While attachment objects may differ in some respects from human attachment figures, I would argue that their impact is no less powerful. In some ways, attachment objects even have an advantage over interpersonal relationships. The inertness of attachment objects

Criteria	Reference
• A need to maintain proximity • Distress upon inexplicable separation • Pleasure or joy upon reunion • Grief at loss • Seeking to obtain an experience of security and comfort in the relationship with the partner (after which the individual can “move off” from the secure base provided to engage in other activities)	Ainsworth (1993, 38)
• Repeated intimate physical contact • Choosing a specific person – particularly someone who is kind, responsive, competent, and familiar • Distress upon separation and loss • Physical and psychological health effects (positive if pair bonds are present, negative if pair bonds are lacking)	Zeifman and Hazan (2016, 420–423)

Table 2.3: Criteria for attachment bonds, as noted by Ainsworth (1993), and Zeifman and Hazan (2016).

could be considered a disadvantage, as they are unable to provide the direct care so integral to attachment relationships. However, this inertness may actually be an advantage for some. Support from loved ones is, admittedly, not always effective, particularly if it comes across as insensitive (Jakubiak and Feeney 2019, 2), whereas attachment objects are more reliable, capable of being controlled by the user (Konok et al. 2016). We can project whatever thoughts or feelings we want onto attachment projects, to an extent not possible in our relationships with other people. Similarly, human attachment figures may not always be present, but you can carry around or wear an attachment object, allowing it to be a constant presence if required.

There is continuing debate, however, over whether nonhuman attachment figures, particularly objects, are as effective as human attachment figures. Many authors discussing object attachment tend to see it as a behaviour which is fundamentally compensatory, resulting from a lack of interpersonal relationships which satisfy our attachment needs (Gardner, Pickett and Knowles 2005; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016, 924; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer et al. 2014; Niemyjska 2019). Gardner, Pickett and Knowles (2005), for instance, refer to such objects as ‘social snacks’, viewing them as temporary stopgaps in times of need. However, there appears to be little empirical evidence to support this idea – indeed, Gardner and colleagues do not give any convincing justification for their argument – so this is evidently an area in which more research needs to be undertaken.

Within this thesis it will be interesting to explore this area, and to discern whether, as I suspect, attachment objects are not merely compensatory sources of attachment security, but significant attachment figures in their own right. Consider, for example, the reactions of young children who lose a treasured toy. The sorrow these children feel and express suggests that these objects are far more than compensatory, with their primary attachment figures (parents and caregivers) often unable to soothe them during such crises.

Another area which it may also be important to consider in this thesis is the very nature of attachment objects, particularly with regards to the ways in which they can and do have multiple meanings and functions. Attachment objects are often not *just* attachment objects. For example, someone might be attached to their engagement ring. Its presence may bring them feelings of comfort and security, but as an object it is also a signifier of their status as an engaged (or married) person, and would have played a significant role in the ritual of proposal. They may also like the look of the ring, giving it aesthetic value, and if their partner gave them a ring handed down to them, it may have historical and familial value as an heirloom.

This may make it difficult to discern an attachment object from other kinds of objects. How do we tell if an object is an attachment object, when it may have had any other number of functions? Any object can become an attachment object, because this behaviour is heavily dependent on the person using it. Teddy bears and wedding rings are not the only objects to which humans become attached (and these are stereotypically Western attachment objects). Attachment objects may have a number of other functions, and this is not a problem – in fact, it is an important reminder of the fluidity of material meanings, and the interesting ways in which humans adapt and change their use of material culture. This fluidity is not unique to attachment objects. As Ainsworth (1993, 37) has noted, interpersonal relationships can have many functions, including attachment: “a mother may interact with her infant as caregiver, as playmate, and/or as a teacher”. Attachment bonds are not the only connections we have to attachment figures; they are more multi-faceted than this.

Complicating things further, is the ‘fuzziness’ around the notion of comfort. Attachment objects are often called ‘comfort objects’ and in my own definition of object attachment I use this word, although in the strictest sense of attachment theory, these objects provide *security*, which is what makes us feel comforted. However, comfort in and of itself is not necessarily

attachment – there may be, for example, the tactile comfort of touching a soft blanket to which one is not necessarily attached. This begs the question of how we can tell apart different kinds of comfort. This is an area not covered by the literature, and I suspect this is a question without an easy answer. Understanding the contextual factors involved in attachment will go a long way to answering this question, and providing an easier way to distinguish attachment-related comfort from other kinds of comfort.

Compared to other areas of attachment research, there is a comparatively small body of literature on object attachment and nonhuman attachment more generally. There is clearly potential for far more research into this area. As such, this thesis will seek to shed light on the nature of attachment objects in more detail. As part of this, I will consider the characteristics of attachment objects, as well as the contextual factors which promote object attachment. In doing so, hopefully some of the answers regarding whether they are compensatory, how attachment links to other forms of meaning, and how it differs, too, may be provided.

What does psychology tell us, and what questions remain unanswered?

Psychology provides us with a clear, basic framework with which to begin this study of object attachment. From the perspective of psychology, object attachment appears to be a cultural co-option of our biological, mammalian attachment system, one of many ways in which we seek security throughout our lives. If we wish to understand our relationship with attachment objects in the past, we must understand them in the present, and the existing body of psychological research provides an excellent basis for doing so.

However, throughout this chapter, a clear theme has arisen: the contextual nature of attachment. Psychology tends to assume that it is dealing with human universals – thoughts and behaviours shared by all. Yet, while attachment is a biological mechanism, it is also heavily shaped by our upbringing, culture, and individual experiences, leading to incredible variability both between and within different human cultures and societies. While psychology has some insight into these factors in WEIRD societies, this is not enough, as these cultures are not truly representative of humans generally. If we want to understand object attachment in humanity as a whole, in order to extrapolate it back into the past, we need to understand how it works

across a broader span of humanity. We still need a more nuanced conception of object attachment, which psychology alone cannot provide.

With all of this in mind, there are clearly a number of questions which remain to be answered.

How does object attachment vary?

From the psychological literature, we understand to a certain extent how object attachment varies, on both a biological and an individual basis, but this understanding is limited. There is a clear gap for research into how object attachment varies outside of WEIRD societies. We need to consider whether there are particular cultural patterns, and whether these are predictable, and whether there are certain factors which are clearly linked to variation in object attachment. Understanding how object attachment varies will be invaluable from an archaeological perspective, as it will help us to identify contexts in which attachment objects were likely to have been used.

How does object attachment differ from other forms of engagement with material culture?

Similarly, we have little understanding of the nature of human relationships with these objects. Psychology, being a discipline focused primarily on people, has prioritised the study of how these objects make people feel and act, and to a certain extent has ignored the objects themselves. Psychologists have not compared attachment objects to other kinds of similar objects such as heirlooms, and so we have little understanding of what makes object attachment unique, and why it is so prevalent. This project is, at heart, trying to understand the attachments that people form with particular objects, and understanding how these attachments are unique from other forms of material engagement is crucial.

What are the characteristics of attachment objects?

This neglect of the objects themselves means that we also do not understand whether attachment objects as a whole have anything in common. Due to the apparent variability of attachment objects (as I have already noted here, almost anything can be an attachment object), common characteristics may be difficult to discern. Yet, from an archaeological perspective, this is a necessary question if we are to develop ways of understanding object attachment in the past. If we are to truly understand the attachments that people form to certain objects, we need to place the people and the objects involved on an equal footing.

Summary

This chapter has explored the psychological background to this thesis, based on the psychological theory of attachment. In doing so, we have learnt that attachment theory is a core theory within psychological studies of socio-emotional relationships, and that it can be expanded to cover a range of relationships, including those with inanimate objects. Psychological studies of attachment provide us with a good understanding of how object attachment functions, and how it may have evolved, but questions remain regarding how it varies, how it differs from the other ways in which people engage with material culture, and how it affects the objects themselves.

Theories and concepts from archaeology and anthropology may be one way of interrogating these questions further, emphasising the cross-cultural and material elements that psychology neglects. In the next chapter, I will critically appraise what these two disciplines have to tell us, and what else remains to be done in order to deepen our understanding of object attachment.

Chapter 3

Intellectual Background: Objects and Attachment in Broader Context

In the last chapter, we established that psychological approaches provide us with a basic framework with which to understand object attachment. However, this framework is overly Westernised, and lacks insights into both cross-cultural variation and the objects themselves. If we are to develop a well-rounded understanding of object attachment, we need to consider how it functions outside of Western, industrialised contexts, in both the past and present.

We must consider, then, disciplines which can shed light on both the cross-cultural and material aspects of object attachment. The two disciplines which immediately come to mind here are anthropology and archaeology. Both disciplines have a long joint history and a common interest in life in non-Western, non-industrialised societies, anthropology in the present and archaeology in the past. Both, too, can tell us more about how people relate to objects.

In this chapter, I will begin by briefly discussing the joint history of anthropology and archaeology. I will move on to a discussion of ethnoarchaeology, a subfield combining insights

from both disciplines, but which has received much criticism since its inception. I will also consider the lack of existing anthropological studies into object attachment. From this, I will move on to discuss what archaeology as a discipline may be able to contribute to a broader, more cross-cultural understanding of object attachment, and consider why it has not done so yet.

Together, anthropology and archaeology provide similar yet distinct approaches to the study of object attachment, offering a complementary perspective to psychological approaches. By combining psychological, anthropological and archaeological approaches, we can gain a more representative understanding of how object attachment functions among humans today and in the past.

Anthropology and archaeology: a shared history

However similar or different they may appear today, anthropology and archaeology have a long shared history and a number of shared goals. Both disciplines arose from a common interest in understanding the true breadth of human social and cultural diversity (Garrow and Yarrow 2010, 1). In the US, the two remain firmly linked. Willey and Phillips (1958, 2) once famously wrote that “American archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing”, and this sentiment remains today, so much so that archaeology is considered a subfield of anthropology in the US, rather than a separate discipline.

However, an increasing number of archaeologists, particularly British archaeologists, have questioned the nature of the relationship between these two disciplines, and the degree to which they are united (Ingold 1992, 694; Marciniak and Yalman 2013, 3–4) or divided (Garrow and Yarrow 2010, 3; Renfrew 1980, 294) in their aims, theories and methods. They differ in certain, significant ways: anthropology deals with the present, while archaeology deals with the past, and anthropology is more concerned with material culture as a means of understanding social relationships, while archaeology increasingly sees material culture as important in its own right, and relies on it heavily (Cummings 2013, 113–114). Nonetheless, while they are different disciplines, they share the same broad goals, united in an interest in the diversity of the human experience (Cummings 2013, 140; Garrow and Yarrow 2010, 10), albeit from different points in time.

Both disciplines can learn from one another, though many argue that there is a degree of imbalance in their relationship, with anthropology contributing a great deal to archaeological theory and methods, while taking little in return (Garrow and Yarrow 2010, 1; Gosden 1999, 9). Archaeology has gained a great deal from the inclusion of anthropological theories, methods and evidence, which provide us with illuminating insights into areas of human life which may seem entirely invisible in the archaeological record and which, more importantly, broaden our mind to the diversity of human life and behaviour.

Anthropology and ethnography: broadening our perspective

A consequence of archaeology's borrowing of anthropological ideas has been the development of ethnoarchaeology, an endeavour which has evolved alongside archaeology since the latter's inception. Ethnoarchaeology is, quite simply, an approach which uses ethnographic data to answer archaeological questions (Cunningham and McGeough 2018, 162; Marciniak and Yalman 2013, 4; Skibo 2009, 29). In essence, ethnoarchaeologists combine anthropology and archaeology, studying modern people and societies in order to understand those of the past (Cummings 2013, 7).

Origins and criticisms of ethnoarchaeology

Ethnoarchaeology has been used by archaeologists in many different ways, for many different purposes. In the early days of ethnoarchaeology, antiquarians used insights from, at the time, recently discovered modern hunter-gatherer groups to make direct comparisons with past peoples (Cummings 2013, 5). Unsurprisingly, this served only to support colonial, racist, unilinear views of evolution which viewed both modern and prehistoric hunter-gatherers as 'primitive', in comparison to 'civilised' peoples in the Western world (Wylie 1985, 65–66). Unfortunately, this view of ethnoarchaeology appears to be the one that has stuck in the minds of many researchers, which may be part of the reason it remains a controversial subfield of archaeology.

Binford and universal laws of behaviour

The ethnographic study of hunter-gatherers became popular again in the 1960s alongside the rise of processualism, and is often tied to Lewis Binford, a key proponent of ethnoarchaeological approaches in the twentieth century (Binford 1980; Cunningham 2013, 53; David and Kramer 2001, 6). In Binford's view, the aims of archaeology should be the same

as those of anthropology, studying the behaviour and the social and cultural development of humans (think back to Willey and Phillips' quote, written around this same time, to see that Binford was not the only person to support such an idea). Binford saw ethnographic data as supporting processualism's search for a more 'scientific' archaeology, with the potential to provide a series of generalisations that could be used to develop broader models of human behaviour which were equally valid cross-culturally, and which could be tested against the archaeological record using direct analogies (Cummings 2013, 7; Cunningham 2003, 404; Marciniak and Yalman 2013, 3). Binford also believed that anthropological and ethnographic data might explain how human behaviour becomes translated into objects, providing explanations that applied to all humans, present and past. In Binford's eyes, clearly, ethnographic data could be an incredibly powerful tool in which to ground archaeological interpretations of the past.

Ethnoarchaeology as a cautionary tale

Unsurprisingly, the notion of generalised laws of behaviour is problematic, and has not been as successful as Binford might have hoped. Decades of ethnographic research has demonstrated the incredible diversity of human behaviour, and thus our inability to make the kinds of generalisations favoured by Binford (Cummings 2013, 132; Cunningham 2013, 59). Anthropological and ethnographic research clearly show us that present day hunter-gatherers are not a direct analog for the prehistoric past, and that there are few true universals of human behaviour (David and Kramer 2001, 16; Johnson 2019, 58).

Anthropological and ethnographic data have instead provided archaeologists with many 'cautionary tales' warning against universal understandings of human behaviour, demonstrating the difficulty inherent in trying to make comparisons between the present and the past (Cunningham 2013, 59). For some archaeologists, ethnoarchaeology's job seems to be nothing more than these cautionary tales which do not help interpret the archaeological record at all, but instead demonstrate the difficulty in assuming any behaviour in the past (Skibo 2009, 36).

However, this lack of universality can in fact be a useful counterpoint to psychological research. If we look to the psychological study of emotions, for example, ethnographic evidence can be eye-opening. Psychologist Paul Ekman has argued that there are basic universal emotions and that all humans share the same facial expressions when expressing

emotion (Figure 3.1) (Ekman 1992, 1993). Yet Jean Briggs (1970), an anthropologist who lived with the Utkuhiksalingmiut (a Canadian Inuit nation) in the early 1960s, noted that the group had entirely different ways of expressing emotion, which was entirely alien to Western conceptions of emotion and its relation to body language.

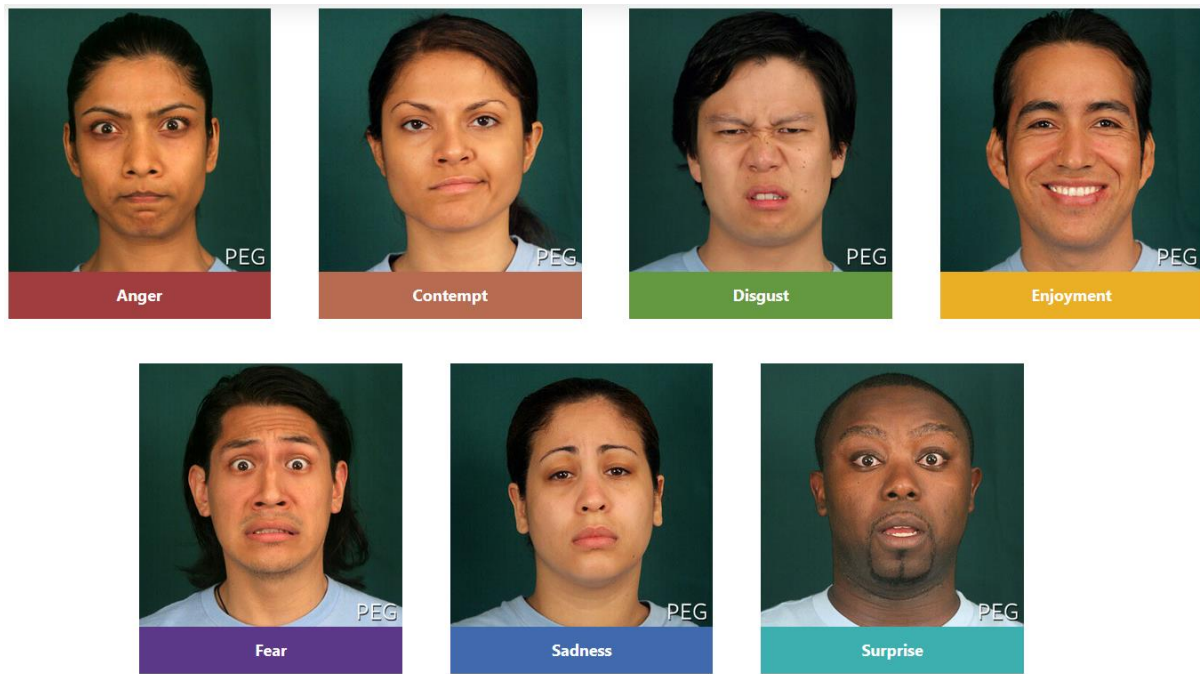


Figure 3.1: The seven basic emotions, according to Paul Ekman, represented by purportedly universally understood facial expressions (Paul Ekman Group 2021).

Racism and colonialism in hunter-gatherer research

Another issue with the universality put forward by Binford and his peers is the problematic racial and xenophobic overtones it invites. Binford's work came to the fore at a time when academic conceptions of hunter-gatherers were changing. Early anthropologists often considered hunter gatherers to be nothing more than primitive relics. The famous *Man the Hunter* conference in 1966, however, led to a different, altogether Rousseauian conception of hunter-gatherers as the 'original affluent society' (Cummings 2013, 6–7; Sahlins 1966, 85). Yet this conception of hunter gatherers as 'noble savages', untouched by modern life, was as inherently flawed and racist as earlier accounts.

Both conceptions of modern hunter-gatherers – firstly as primitive peoples needing to be civilised, and later as 'noble savages' – are categorically racist and xenophobic. The insinuation often inherent in these conceptions of hunter-gatherers is that modern hunter-gatherers are relics of a bygone era and thus appropriate as a point of direct comparison with the past.

Political, moral, and ethical considerations aside, this is simply incorrect. Creating parallels between modern-day hunter-gatherers and the past perpetuates racist, colonialist attitudes towards non-industrialised societies. We have to be careful not to treat any living society as if it is “an analog for the environments of evolutionary adaptedness” (Clancy and Davis 2019, 172). This thesis will not be treating any ethnographic culture as a direct analogy for the past, as this would be both ethically reprehensible and factually incorrect. Anthropologists have warned against the tendency to treat modern hunter-gatherer societies as inferior, primitive, ‘exotic’, or ‘Other’ (Clancy and Davis 2019, 171, 178–179). Human cultures cannot and should not be split into Western and non-Western categories, and it is naïve, not to mention offensive, to assume that there has been no change over time in modern hunter-gatherer cultures.

There are only a handful of hunter-gatherer societies today who have not felt colonial or industrial influences (Cummings 2013, 2). Most modern hunter-gatherers have been heavily impacted by colonialism and industrialisation, leading to changes in their subsistence practices, technologies, and cultures. Many of the ‘classic’ pieces of anthropological literature were written at a time when these influences were already being felt (Cummings 2013, 3). For example, most ethnographic studies of Alaska Native nations today rely at least partly on ethnographies by Murdoch (1892) and Nelson (1900), but these were written at a time when these nations had already begun to exchange goods and sell art to explorers, whalers, and traders.

Understanding human behaviour as ‘variations on a theme’

Despite these drawbacks, insights from anthropology and ethnography can still be useful, providing us with a timely reminder of the cultural and historical specificity of human life, and the variability of human thought and behaviour. In this respect, ethnoarchaeology is an effective tool for helping us to shed “universalist assumptions” (Cunningham 2003, 404), recognising that much of human behaviour comprises what we might call ‘variations on a theme’ (Kehoe 2013, 114).

In the context of this thesis, ethnoarchaeology might thus lead us to important questions about whether object attachment is universally expressed, and whether certain cultures are more or less likely to be emotionally attached to certain objects. Think back to my experience with Norris, for example. I was given Norris as a newborn. The gifting of stuffed toys to young

babies is, in my culture, a common practice, and may be part of the reason I am attached to him. But what of other cultures, where this practice does not exist, or other families who do not follow such practices?

Ethnoarchaeology today

Despite its potential, this complexity and lack of universality found within ethnoarchaeology has led some to abandon it altogether. Gosselain in particular has argued that ethnoarchaeology continues to suffer from a plethora of methodological and theoretical issues, including a racist, dualistic ideology splitting the world into Western and non-industrialised societies, with the implicit assumption that non-industrialised societies are static and never changing and that these societies are somehow less materialistic and more ritualistic than their Western counterparts (Gosselain 2016).

Gosselain's picture of ethnoarchaeology is fairly outdated, and has the feeling of a straw man argument, constructing and then knocking down a version of ethnoarchaeology that has not been practiced for some time. I would argue that Gosselain's criticisms relate more to the kinds of anthropology practiced in the 19th and early 20th centuries than they do to present practice.

From direct to relational analogies

Nevertheless, we must take care with the way that we use ethnographic evidence in archaeology. In prehistoric research, for example, the use of ethnographic analogy has been heavily employed to understand past hunter-gatherer lives, and material culture. Yet the environments traversed by prehistoric hunter-gatherers have no equal today; creating direct, formal parallels between European Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers living in a mammoth steppe landscape with almost no modern parallel, and any modern hunter-gatherer group, would be unhelpful. When considering object attachment in the past, we need to think about the contextual differences between the societies being studied, or we risk making unfounded assumptions that bear no resemblance to archaeological reality. This is in line, however, with how ethnoarchaeology is viewed and conducted by those using it today.

Ethnographic analogies remain an integral part of any ethnoarchaeologist's toolkit, though the form of these analogies have altered somewhat. Ethnoarchaeological analogies today are generally *relational*, rather than *direct*. Unlike direct or 'formal' analogies, in which direct

parallels are drawn between different societies, relational analogies are more interested in “different manifestations of the same structuring principle” (Cummings 2013, 9). This approach to analogies is stronger as it includes a consideration of causal mechanisms and requires some evidence of continuity or similarity between two contexts (Cummings 2013, 10; David and Kramer 2001; Wylie 1985, 95). In line with broader postprocessual thought in archaeology, ethnoarchaeologists are more interested in notions of historical and cultural specificity, and the role of material culture. This, combined with the use of relational analogies, makes for a richer view of humanity, as well as a more realistic use of ethnographic evidence.

Given the ubiquity of analogies within archaeology, it is better to be explicit about our use of them, and aware of their limitations, rather than throwing them out altogether. Analogies are an inductive methodology and cannot *prove* the existence of certain behaviours, but they do provide fascinating inferences and insights into archaeological cultures. The value of analogical inference lies in the quality of the analogy drawn, and the suitability of the cultures being compared. The strengthening of analogies is “a continuous interpretive challenge” for archaeologists (Lane 2014, 105), but it is a challenge to which archaeologists have risen over the last few decades.

Along with methodological changes in the use of analogies, ethnoarchaeological theory has also seen a shift over the last couple of decades in the way it thinks about ethnographic cultures, in response to postcolonial critique (Lyons and David 2019, 102). Today, there is a wide and detailed body of literature reconsidering ethnoarchaeology (Cunningham and MacEachern 2016). Those who advocate for its use do not do so lightly. Ethnoarchaeologists appear in many cases to be only too aware of the limitations and risks associated with their line of work (Hamon 2016). The challenge for archaeologists, who are increasingly encouraged to pursue multidisciplinary work but who may not be entirely up to date with changing values and norms within ethnoarchaeological research, is thus to avoid the use of direct, uncritical analogies, and ensure that they do not fall into the trap of making naïve and damaging comparisons between the past and present.

The value of ethnoarchaeology today

Arguing over the relevance or utility of ethnographic data for archaeology is today less a matter of *if* it is useful, and more a matter of how it is *most* useful. Cunningham and

McGeough (2018, 185) have aptly described the value of ethnography today as a "consciousness-expanding exercise". There is a growing acknowledgement of the value of ethnographic data in offering archaeologists a broader perspective on human behaviour and material culture than is possible from the archaeological record alone (Cummings 2013, 11; Kamp and Whittaker 2016, 674; Lyons and David 2019, 105; Cunningham 2018, 5). No researcher is without bias, and studying a broader range of cultures opens our eyes to the breadth of human behaviour and the possibilities of human experience.

This is a useful reminder, too, that the world is constructed by people in multiple ways (Lyons and Supernant 2020, 7). Viewing the past through our own (often white, Western, and industrialised) lens inevitably means that we lack an understanding of the multiplicity of possibilities of human life, and the different ways in which different people and different cultures engage with the world. In this respect, ethnoarchaeology has a role alongside Indigenous science and other frameworks which have recently become more widely acknowledged in archaeological theory, broadening our minds as to the potentials and possibilities of human behaviour.

Ethnoarchaeological approaches are thus most effective in challenging our fundamental ideas and biases about humanity, demonstrating the variability inherent within human cultures and behaviours, and the complexity of the human-material relationship (Cunningham 2009, 116; Hamilakis 2016; Kamp and Whittaker 2016, 674–675; Lane 2016, 605; Lyons and Casey 2016, 610; McNiven 2016, 684; Overmann and Coolidge 2019, 6; Politis 2016, 706; Lavi and Friesem 2019, 1). While still studying non-Western cultures and societies, the focus of ethnoarchaeology is moving. Rather than studying hunter-gatherer cultures because they are seen as demonstrating 'traditional' behaviours and material culture, ethnoarchaeologists are instead turning their attention to these cultures to broaden their understanding of humanity (Cunningham and MacEachern 2016, 637; Lane 2014, 140). Work by Sophie de Beaune, for example, looking at ethnographic data from contemporary hunter-gatherers, has allowed for a sustained critique of archaeologists' interpretations of gender roles in the Upper Palaeolithic, which de Beaune (2019) argues have been influenced by archaeologists' own cultural expectations. This may be incredibly valuable when looking at object attachment, helping us to go beyond psychology to interrogate our assumptions about people's relationships with material culture.

Ethnoarchaeology also shines a light on aspects of human life which are generally archaeologically invisible, or which have been lost to time (Krupnik and Chlenov 2013, 219; McNiven 2016, 685). Indeed, Skibo (2009, 41) has argued that ethnoarchaeology's most useful contribution is in acknowledging and exploring the relationships between people and things. There are plenty of interesting parts of human life, for example, which leave no trace in the archaeological record, such as language, stories, and songs. Polly Wiessner's work with the Ju/'hoansi of southern Africa has shed light on fire's role not just as a functional tool for subsistence and survival, but as a way of encouraging night-time storytelling, thus acting as an important tool for cultural, spiritual, and emotional connection and continuation (Wiessner 2014). To the archaeologist, we can see hearths and the objects around them, but the potential for storytelling, an immaterial use of fire, is invisible, and would remain so without the insights of ethnoarchaeology. In a similar vein, ethnoarchaeology may help us to consider how object attachment can become materially visible over time. Through psychology, we understand little about the objects involved in object attachment, so ethnoarchaeology may provide a useful inroad.

Though it continues to grapple with methodological and theoretical issues, ethnoarchaeology is still one of the best tools at archaeologists' disposal for broadening our interpretative perspectives and understanding the true variability and possibilities of the human experience (Cummings 2013, 11; Politis 2016, 708). It provides the opportunity for new ways of thinking about archaeological evidence, as well as a more nuanced understanding of the relationship that people have with objects in non-Western societies (Cummings 2013, 11).

It is within these contexts that I have chosen to draw upon ethnographic data for my own thesis. I am not trying to use this data to draw direct comparisons between object attachment in the past and present; rather, I am using it to broaden my understanding of how object attachment functions in the present, looking at societies different from the Western, industrialised societies which make up the bulk of the psychological literature. Just as ethnoarchaeology has taught us a great deal about many other seemingly invisible areas of human life, it may have the potential to teach us more about how certain people and cultures emotionally relate to material culture.

Anthropological and ethnographic studies of object attachment

Ideally, anthropology and ethnography would be able to provide a wealth of information into intercultural patterns of object attachment. However, this is not the case. Even cross-cultural studies of object attachment still focus overwhelmingly on individuals (particularly children) from Western, industrialised nations (for example, Hong and Townes (1976)). Anthropologist Daniel Miller is well-known for his research into more mundane, everyday objects and our relationship with them, as detailed in his books *The Comfort of Things* (Miller 2008) and *Stuff* (Miller 2010) yet, again, these focus on Western societies. While attachment itself has occasionally been touched upon in the ethnographic literature with regards to parenting, most notably by Hewlett et al. (2000), there is a total lack of any explicitly ethnographic research into emotional attachments to objects. Given that psychologists themselves have given it limited attention, this is no surprise.

A lack of insight into cross-cultural patterns or variation in object attachment is the result of a number of factors. The majority of psychological research into object attachment has concerned children, but anthropological and ethnographic research has, until relatively recently, ignored the vital role of children in human societies (Hardman 2001, 503). Furthermore, anthropology has a strained relationship with psychology, which may have limited its interest in the topic of attachment. Sawyer (2002, 148) notes that anthropology has distanced itself from developmental psychology because of the latter's focus on the individual, its perceived ignorance of social, cultural, and historical context, and its inability to explore the "rich depth" of children's lives and associated material culture. Yet in anthropology and ethnography, any potential attachment to objects among adults has been ignored, while the lives of children have been largely omitted until recently.

A wider problem concerns the history of ethnography itself, particularly the way early ethnographies were carried out and written up. Early ethnographies of hunter-gatherers tended to focus on compiling encyclopaedic-like volumes filled with typologies of material culture (see Murdoch 1892 and Nelson 1900 for examples of this in early Alaska Native ethnographies). Thus, as a researcher looking at the socio-emotional and material lives of hunter-gatherer nations, the best we get is the odd glimpse or inference in the ethnographic literature. There are few, if any, insights into the ways in which people and objects are

emotionally connected. When objects are considered, they are a means to an end (i.e., helping us understand people), as opposed to being interesting in their own right, and so material culture still takes a back seat to studies of social relationships.

Archaeology: materially embedded research

This is why an explicitly ethnoarchaeological approach has so much potential in the case of object attachment, allowing me to combine anthropology and ethnography's awareness of, and exposure to, broader ways of living, with archaeology's focus on material culture. It is a longstanding assumption that the relationship between anthropology and archaeology is one-sided, with anthropology contributing much to archaeology but receiving little in return (Garrow and Yarrow 2010, 3; Gosden 1999, xi; Skibo 2009, 28). Yet I would dispute this; there is a great deal of potential for archaeology to inform the way that anthropologists think, particularly with regards to how they study material culture (Cummings 2013, 129). In this thesis, archaeology can add much to the picture of object attachment provided by anthropological and ethnographic approaches.

Unsurprisingly for a field focused on objects, archaeologists have a plethora of theories and methods used to interpret material culture. These have been developed over many decades, and there continues to be a great deal of debate over how to study material culture, often influenced both by trends in archaeological theory as a whole, and by the influence of the diverse cultures and contexts within which archaeologists undertake their work. Like anthropologists, archaeologists are interested in a broader range of lifeways than is provided by modern psychological approaches, but unlike anthropologists, archaeologists use these insights to think about humans in the past, as well as the present. In this respect, archaeology is often much broader in its purview, having an interest in how human life differs temporally as well as spatially.

Trends in archaeological thought have, naturally, led to shifts in how archaeologists have studied material culture through time. Culture Historians in the early to mid-twentieth century used typologies to categorise objects based primarily on their physical characteristics, using this to identify geographical distributions of purported historical groups (Trigger 2006, 215). Processual archaeologists were more interested in the functions of objects, and how material culture represented peoples' mental templates of the world, while postprocessual archaeologists focused instead on objects' meaning and symbolism (Harris and Cipolla 2017,

21–22; Johnson 2019, 78). Approaches to materiality at present draw on all of the theories and approaches outlined above, but there is an increasing move towards non-dualistic approaches. New Materialism has become a particularly popular school of thought, emphasizing the relational nature of the world, and seeking to break down long-held Western ideological barriers between human and non-human, leading to what has been called a ‘material turn’ in archaeology (Harris 2021, 15; Harris and Cipolla 2017, 139, 143). For a thesis on object attachment, this is useful, as it means that studying the objects in their own right is within our reach.

Yet in spite of decades of research, understanding people’s relationships with objects remains difficult, largely because objects themselves are difficult to understand.

Thinking about meaning(s)

Part of the difficulty lies in the fluidity and changeability of meaning within objects. Despite what Culture Historians might have expected, there is not a simple relationship between form, function and meaning, and the forms, functions and meanings of objects are not static. Objects which look the same may have entirely different functions and meanings. One object may have multiple meanings, or come to accrue one meaning while shedding another (Meskell 2017, 24). A necklace which belonged to your mother might have originated simply as a piece of jewellery which she wore on special occasions, but over time, it might accrue deeper meaning linked to the gift-giver. If your mother then passed the necklace down to you, it might take on additional layers of meaning, reminding you of her and connecting you to her. New meanings can come, in time, to supersede an object’s original function (Gamble, Gowlett and Dunbar 2014, 167). The objects around us have complex life-histories of their own, and many different meanings, memories, feelings, and relationships can be tied up within them.

This is complicated, undoubtedly, but as Kissel and Fuentes (2017, 397) have noted, the ability to create objects with meaning (what they call *meaning-making*) not just for ourselves, but for others, is a key part of human behaviour. Yet trying to identify these meanings in the archaeological record is incredibly difficult. Archaeologists have tried to do so in multiple ways – from semiosis (the study of what Kissel and Fuentes call ‘meaning-making processes’), to structuralism (reading meaning from material culture like a text), to poststructuralism (acknowledging that different readings are possible), to object biographies. The list of ways in



Figure 3.2: The 'OK' gesture.
Source: David Levy.

which archaeologists have tried to understand meaning are numerous. But meaning itself continues to be elusive. Meaning is not inscribed on objects like words on a page (Boivin 2004, 64–65), and meanings themselves can be entirely arbitrary. Think about a traffic light, with the green light signifying 'Go' and the red light signifying 'Stop'. *Why* does green mean go? *Why* does red mean stop?

Furthermore, different cultures construct meaning in different ways. For example, in many English-speaking countries, making a circle with one's thumb and index finger (Figure 3.2) denotes approval or agreement. However, in other areas of the world,

this same gesture has an entirely different meaning, being interpreted as vulgar (Armstrong and Wagner 2003). The same is the case with material culture – we cannot and should not assume that meaning is universal. In the case of Norris, he may be easily identified in my culture as a teddy bear who provides love and security, but to someone in a different culture, he may seem simply like a plaything and nothing more. There is nothing in Norris' form which explicitly shows the meaning he holds – yet this meaning is still significant. If we have little idea as to the thought processes of the people connected to an object, as is often the case when interpreting objects made and used a long time ago, discovering the meaning of objects may appear impossible. It is unlikely that we will recognise all of the meanings that one object may have (Hutton 2013, 18; Miller 2005a, 219; Renfrew 2004, 30).

Yet, acknowledging the multiplicity of meaning instead helps us to recognise the inherently evolving nature of material culture. Kissel and Fuentes (2017) make the pertinent point that simply acknowledging the importance of *meaning-making* for humans is an important step towards understanding and interpreting objects, even though we cannot often say what the specific meanings involved actually are. In other words, while we might not know the exact meaning behind an object, knowing that it had some kind of meaning to the person/s using it is still a significant finding.

This multiplicity of meaning complicates our search for an understanding of object attachment. If an object meant something to someone as an attachment object, how might we get at this meaning? Do attachment objects have particular kinds of meanings? From an anecdotal perspective, they often seem to be given as gifts, but are they all gifts? Psychology does not provide the answer to this, and so far, neither has archaeology, which has provided ways of thinking about meaning without ever solving the problems inherent in doing so. These are questions which need to be considered further within this thesis.

Acknowledging agency

When we discuss meaning, we also have to be careful, as it can be easy to fall into the trap of assuming that objects are passive and have meaning imbued in them by humans. Objects are not just representative or reflective of the meanings that they take on, but are far more active than this.

Archaeologists today agree that objects, far from being passive vessels, have *agency* (Barrett 2001). Agency is “the ability to make differences in the world” (Harris and Cipolla 2017, 38). While most material culture is physically inanimate, it can act upon us or affect the world in active and sometimes unexpected ways. We often imbue objects with agency, even if we do not realise that we are doing it – who hasn’t despaired at their printer’s apparent lack of desire to work, particularly when we most need it to? Attachment objects are an excellent example of this. We can gain feelings of comfort and security from them, often without intending to. I did not make a concerted decision as a child to gain comfort from Norris; this happened unintentionally on my part.

Unusually, agency is that rare thing, a concept agreed upon by archaeologists from across the theoretical spectrum (Dobres and Robb 2000, 3), though the exact nature of object agency is the subject of debate. For Alfred Gell (1998), who is most closely associated with the origins of object agency in archaeology, objects are only secondary agents, with their agency depending on humans, who are the primary agents. More recent schools of thought, such as the New Materialists, would counter this interpretation, arguing for flat ontologies which place things and humans on an equal footing (Crellin 2021, 118; Harris and Cipolla 2017, 147). They make the salient point that archaeology’s traditional, dualistic separation of humans and non-humans is more reflective of Western, anthropocentric ways of thinking than of a human reality (Crellin 2021, 118–121; Malafouris and Renfrew 2010, 1; Miller 2005b, 3). Such

approaches are significant for how we understand material culture, as they recognise that objects are not simply reflecting or representing ideas, meanings, and relationships, but have agency and weight in their own right (Stade and Gamble 2019, 323).

Hodder (2012) has famously written about the notion of entanglement: the idea that we are caught up in webs of relationships and dependencies with the things around us. People and objects are bound up in complex reciprocal relationships in which both shape the other, and untangling them is impossible (Boivin 2004; DeMarrais, Gosden and Renfrew 2004, 2; Hodder 2012; Meskell 2005, 3; Miller 2005b, 38; Stade and Gamble 2019, 323). Acknowledging agency further complicates our understanding of objects. It helps us recognise that objects may push back against the meanings we give them, or take on meanings of their own. While we make objects, they in their own way make us who we are, too.

Cognitive archaeologists have added to this picture of objects as active beings. Concepts such as the 'extended mind' (Figure 3.3), 'distributed cognition' and Material Engagement Theory (MET) stress that objects are not reflections or representations of the mind, but active parts of it. They argue that the mind itself does not just consist of the brain, or even the brain and body, but instead encompasses the world around us, including the environment and, most importantly here, objects (Gamble 2013, 14; Malafouris 2008, 2013, 2017; Stade and Gamble 2019, 322; Sterelny 2019, 143).

Cognitive archaeologists now broadly agree that material culture is a crucial constitutive element of the human mind (Boivin 2004; Donald 1998, 181; Gosden 2010; Iliopoulos and

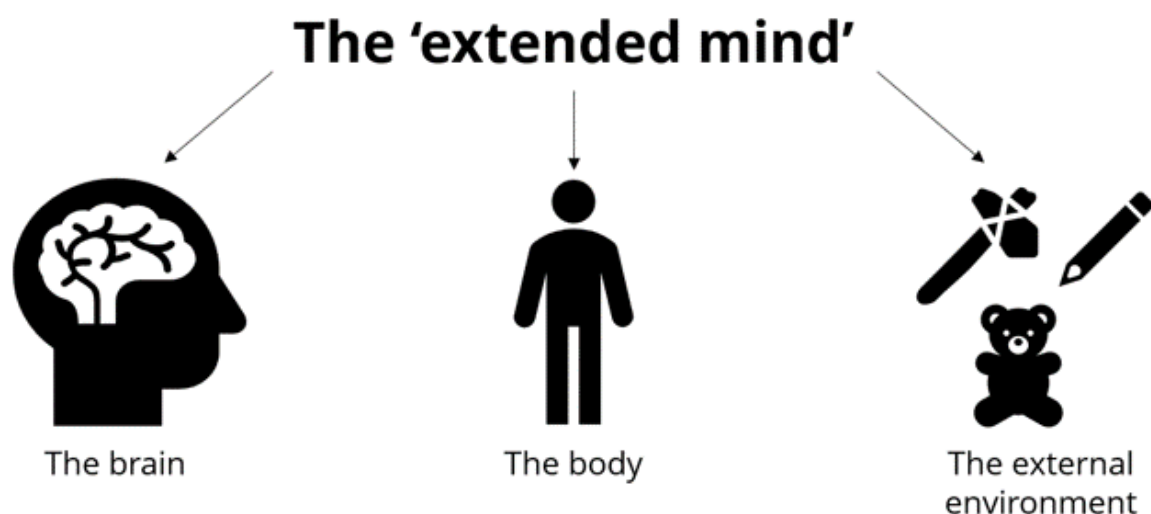


Figure 3.3: The 'extended mind' thesis posits that the mind consists not just of the brain, or even the brain and body, but also our external environment.

Garofoli 2016, 2; Malafouris 2004, 2017, 69; Sterelny 2019, 143), and that objects have played a key role in its evolution (Johannsen 2010, 59; Malafouris 2004, 60; Malafouris and Renfrew 2010, 8–9; Renfrew, Frith and Malafouris 2009, x; Wheeler 2010, 29). The evolution of the mind over time is not simply a matter of gradual encephalisation, but also that of an increasing amount of ‘stuff’ which we use to extend our mind ever further (Gamble 2013, 16). Our engagement with objects embodies, enacts and materially constitutes how we think and act.

The notion of the extended mind, and our cognitive entanglement with objects, helps us to think not just about what attachment objects represent, but what active effects they may have had on the human mind. It helps us to think through the ways in which attachment objects have acted, not just as passive representations of important memories or relationships, but as sources of active socio-emotional support, which build up our sense of security over time. In the case of attachment objects, these form an important part of how we think and act, further underlining the need to study them if we are to understand life in the past.

Archaeological theory here has a lot to add to the study of attachment objects, but it also complicates how we think about them. Attachment objects may not originate as attachment objects, but become significant agents of attachment support over time. This is something which needs to be interrogated further in this thesis, untangling the multiplicity of meanings that attachment objects may have, and acknowledging that other meanings may have come first, before they become sources of attachment. An object’s agency as an attachment object may, over time, change its meaning. This may also affect how we consider their form; even if an object is not first intended as an attachment object, but develops this meaning gradually, might we see evidence of specific patterns of attachment-based wear developing over time? To date, there has been no consideration of attachment-related wear patterns, either in the psychological or archaeological record, so this is clearly an area in need of study.

The social role of objects

Objects hold agency not just in their own right, but as social beings, interconnected in the webs of relations within which everyone finds themselves. As noted in Chapter 2, humans are intensely social animals. Psychologists, neuroscientists and archaeologists all agree that our social relationships may have been a core driver behind the evolution of the human mind (Beckes and Coan 2011; Coan 2010; Coan and Sbarra 2015; Dunbar 2003). Our connection to

others is a fundamental part of human life (Lyons and Supernant 2020, 8), and one that influences material culture, too.

Archaeologists have recognised for many years that objects are often social, connecting us to others, constructing social relationships, and providing a reminder of those relationships. In turn, objects can come to have rich social lives themselves (Appadurai 1986). They can affect our social and emotional closeness to others; social relationships often rely on the involvement of material culture, for example as gifts or mementoes (Miller 2008, 1; Renfrew, Frith and Malafouris 2009, xii). Norris, for example, was originally given to me as a gift by my maternal grandparents.

This recognition has led to some fascinating research into the role of objects as social agents in archaeology. Coward and Gamble have argued that social engagement with material culture during the Palaeolithic would have provided a way to maintain social relationships even at a distance, in effect extending social networks over increasingly large geographical ranges (Coward 2010; Coward 2016; Coward and Gamble 2008; Gamble 1998; Gamble 1999, 93–94; Gamble 2004, 87). Social relationships require a great deal of time and effort, and material culture can take some of this mental burden, providing a reminder of others simply by presence alone (Coward 2016), enabling a ‘release from social proximity’ (Gamble 2004, 87).

Objects do not passively represent social relationships, but can actively create and maintain them. This may go some way to explaining the lasting power of attachment objects, as ways of creating and maintaining relationships between people. As noted earlier, unlike real people, attachment objects can often be moved around and taken with us wherever we go, enabling the ‘release from social proximity’ to continue today.

Objects as mnemonic beings

As insinuated from the above, objects are also powerful mnemonic agents. Memory is complex, and is a topic of much interest to archaeologists (Lillios and Tsamis 2010, 1; Whitehead 2009, 1). Like meaning, it is not static, and the memories associated with an object may change over time. One object may evoke multiple, overlapping memories, creating new ones and forgetting old ones. Furthermore, memory is subjective and interpretive (Jones 2007, 9), and objects can play a role in shaping and reshaping our memories of others. Such is the sociality of memory that philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs spoke of

'collective memory', arguing that memory was an entirely social phenomenon shared among groups (Whitehead 2009, 123). Unlike Halbwachs' 'collective memory', however, the memories associated with objects may be unique to us, the user, though sociality remains a major factor in the significance of these memories.

Some have argued that material culture forms an externalisation of memory (Donald 1998, 181; Jones 2007, 1), though characterising objects as 'external' sources of memory arguably returns us to the human-object dualisms that have already been so thoroughly critiqued by others (Harris and Cipolla 2017). When we think of the notion of the 'extended mind', however, categorising objects as external sources for our memory seems oversimplified. Porr (2010a, 88) has criticised cognitive approaches which treat memory as 'an internal storing of data', with material culture seen as an array of containers for the external storage of memory data. Porr skilfully argues instead that memory emerges from the mutual engagement (and reengagement) between the person and world. In this vein, it may be more productive to think of objects as dynamic beings who create and maintain social memory – an active part of our memory, not an external container for it.

One of the most common ways in which objects can come to represent social memories is as gifts. However, interpretations often revolve around the notion of gift-giving as a social *transaction*, as opposed to a social (and emotional) *relationship*. This is perhaps heavily influenced by Marcel Mauss' famous work *The Gift* (1967), in which he demonstrates a link between gift-giving, reciprocity and morality. This interpretation of material culture here is one primarily based on social obligations (Renfrew 2004, 28) and again emphasizes the external nature of such objects. Such interpretations risk making objects seem like passive representations of sociality, rather than active social agents. Objects have an *active* ability to evoke memories, social and otherwise, and can *actively* connect us to others, even at a distance. As a reminder of my grandparents, who lived far away when I was young, and who have since passed away, Norris is not just a bear, but a lasting connection to family and a reminder of their love.

In the case of attachment objects, then, this provides us with an interesting way to think about the role of these objects in shaping social memory. They may remind us of significant social memories or events, helping to connect us socially to others even when they are far away (or gone entirely). In this vein, it is no surprise that attachment objects appear to evoke such

strong feelings. As active social and mnemonic agents, they provide a way to remember and recreate our social relationships, along with all of the accompanying feelings involved.

The emotional side of objects

There is thus a great deal of emotion and feeling imbued in our social and mnemonic relationships with objects. Attachment objects are emotional objects, giving us feelings of comfort and security which are integral to the way we think, act and live.

Emotion is a contentious area of study in archaeology, however. While work on emotion is gradually developing and maturing, archaeology has historically struggled to figure out exactly how to do justice to the complexity of our emotional lives. This may be the result of a continuing stigma against the importance of emotion, linked to the traditional view of emotions as being in opposition to logic or reason, and thus having little impact on rational thought and behaviour (Gosden 2004, 33). However, modern psychological and neuroscientific studies emphasize the importance of emotion in shaping human minds, behaviours and decisions (Bechara 2004; Beckes and Coan 2011, 984; Damasio and Carvalho 2013; Grimshaw 2018; Meshulam et al. 2012; Panksepp and Biven 2012; Pessoa 2008; Poppa and Bechara 2018).

A consideration of emotion, and its links to material culture, are therefore vital if archaeologists are to understand the full complexity of human life and “amplify the humanity” (Baxter 2020, 137) of those who came before us. How to do so, however, is a question with no easy answer. As noted in Chapter 1, understanding emotional experiences like object attachment from an archaeological perspective means focusing on the material aspects of these experiences, rather than the emotions and feelings involved, as it is the material aspects which survive in the archaeological record.

Archaeologists have thus tried to link emotions and material culture in a variety of ways. The simplest way is to tie a direct link between specific emotions and specific kinds of material culture. Grief is one obvious example. After the death of a loved one, we might hang on to their belongings, and find solace (or even pain) in objects that remind us of them. As such, grief is often explored in the archaeological record through material culture related to mortuary practices, such as grave goods (for example, Cannon and Cook (2015) and Macdonald (2001)), although these are often objects left with the deceased, rather than the living. Büster (2021), however, has taken a different approach, focusing on what she calls

'problematic stuff'. She interprets cached objects within domestic spaces in Iron Age Scotland as examples of objects which had become problematic over time due to their association with the deceased, which could not be thrown away because of the ongoing social and emotional connection to loved ones. This is a poignant example of how archaeologists have attempted to connect emotion and material culture, and demonstrates the enduring nature of our attachments to even mundane objects.

However, most emotional experiences cannot be directly translated into material culture. As with meaning, emotion cannot be read off artefacts like words on a page. If we look at object attachment, we already know that attachment objects can vary widely in form and function in the modern world. In Western cultures, attachment objects can take the form of teddy bears, jewellery, books, clothes – or really anything at all. We currently know of no unifying characteristics which can attest to an object's role as an attachment object – so how are we to know what kinds of objects induced attachment-related feelings among people who lived generations ago?

There is, perhaps, a wider problem here as well when trying to discern direct links between material culture and emotions. The very notion of giving emotions set definitions is problematic (think back to Ekman's core emotions, and the role of ethnographic work in shedding light on the variability of emotional experience). Western archaeologists run the risk of using Westernised emotion-related terms to look for specific kinds of emotions in the past, emotions which may not have been present at all, or which may have been experienced in different ways. It is for this reason that I prefer to speak of 'emotional experiences', rather than specific emotions, as this helps us to move away from set categories and recognise the variability of our experiences of emotion.

The question remains, however, as to how we can connect emotional experiences and material culture. It may be most helpful to consider how emotional experiences become materially embedded over time. Some emotional experiences might be too fleeting to leave a mark, but other emotional experiences are more long-term, and leave a trace.

One such method of doing so, may be to consider how our emotions and feelings are tied to the wider world in which we live. Cultural and social context will be key to any understanding of the materiality of emotion. While psychological studies of emotion treat it largely as an individual experience, we know that emotion is inherently social, with our social background

teaching us how we are expected to feel and express emotion (Panksepp 2007, 145). Emotions act as a “social glue” (Stade and Gamble 2019, 322), helping us to form long-lasting bonds to one another (Gamble, Gowlett and Dunbar 2011, 127). There is thus a shared basis to emotional experiences, and we should be able to see both psychological and cultural similarities in emotional expression. At the very least, we can say that individuals from the same community would likely have experienced and enacted emotion in similar ways, whether resulting from a common biology, genetic influences, or cultural background. Emotion is complicated, filtered through biological, cultural, social, and individual contexts (Baxter 2020, 128). Yet a search for common social and cultural emotional experiences and values holds promise, more useful than trying to highlight individual emotional experience in the archaeological record (Fleisher and Norman 2015; Tarlow 2000), while still accounting for the inherent variability within and between cultures (Cannon and Cook 2015).

Over time, these common social emotional experiences can become translated into material culture. Historian Barbara Rosenwein’s (2002) concept of ‘emotional communities’ reminds us that materially embodied patterns of emotion may become widespread through a group or community over time. Heritage practitioners use the concept of ‘affective practice’ to try to understand better how to identify regular, familiar patterns of emotional experience and their connection with social relations (Wetherell, Smith and Campbell 2018, 5). Affective practice acknowledges that affect and emotion can follow predictable, regular patterns which can become materially embodied. Despite the individuality of attachment objects, we can thus likely expect a heavy social element involved in their creation and use, which will make them a little easier to look for than if they were entirely individual. In Western cultures, for example, it is common to give a teddy bear or stuffed toy to a young child, and these objects can become the focus of intense social and emotional connection.

It has been said again and again in this chapter that humans are tied up in webs of relations, emotional as well as social. Objects play a major part in these webs, tying us to others and ensuring that humans are entirely relational beings (Lyons and Supernant 2020, 9). Coward and Gamble (2008) alluded to this in their discussion of the role of objects in the ‘release from social proximity’ – they are clear that this relationship with objects is emotional, as well as social. Trying to understand objects arguably becomes simpler when we recognise that there may be common socio-emotional patterns underlying the apparent variation.

With approaches embedded in shared emotional experiences, emotion becomes less of a fleeting, intangible concept, and becomes something altogether more concrete. Archaeologists readily accept the idea that symbols of status or identity can become widespread through social use, so it should not be difficult to accept the notion of common emotional patterns expressed in material culture, too.

However, in doing so, we still need to be careful not to paint a picture of objects as emotionally passive, as merely representing or reflecting our feelings. Material culture imbued with emotion can induce an emotional experience in those who use it, but this relationship between people and things becomes one of a feedback loop in which both influence and shape the other (Newell 2017, 3). Similar to meaning and memory, objects can store up emotion and affect over time (Newell 2017, 6), and these emotions may shift and change. Unlike what psychological approaches might suggest, attachment objects do not *reflect* relationships and feelings, but actively *induce* them, and the feelings associated with an attachment object may change over time as our relationship with the object lengthens. We may not mean to feel happy or sad when we look at an attachment object; the feelings we associate with them may be out of our control to a certain degree. Emotional objects have power, sometimes beyond that which we attribute to them. In this regard, it is no wonder that things like attachment objects can cause such strong physical and emotional responses in humans.

This physical and sensory emotional response is itself of potential interest to archaeologists, through an approach called phenomenology. Phenomenology focuses on sensorial experience – in other words, the senses and their role in the human experience. Hamilakis (2013) has noted that sensorial experience and affect are part of the same field, and that the senses allow the body to be affected in an emotional way. He goes so far as to say that the sensorial, affective meanings of objects are fundamental to them (Hamilakis 2017), and emphasizes the social and material nature of felt experience (Hamilakis 2013, 124). In short, material culture engages our senses and our emotions. We have to be careful not to take this to mean that we are trying to feel the same way people felt in the past, or somehow empathise with them, as this is a foolhardy pursuit (Renfrew 2004, 24). Instead, Hamilakis urges us to consider how sensorial experience may have shaped affect, emotion, and material culture, and therefore people's lives (Hamilakis 2013, 2017).

This may be another useful way in which to think about object attachment. What feelings are associated with object attachment, but more importantly, what effects may these feelings have had? We know from attachment theory that there are a number of effects associated with the security that comes from object attachment, but what larger impact might these feelings have had, whether individually, socially or culturally? Might the feelings associated with object attachment have had a broader role to play in the development of human life, and material culture, over time? In this respect, my interest here is arguably less in the feelings themselves, and more in the *impact* of said feelings, whether that impact is social or material. Again, it is the material aspect of our feelings which is left in the archaeological record, not the feelings themselves.

Objects are difficult to understand. They have multiple, shifting, overlapping meanings, making them hard to interpret for archaeologists living hundreds or thousands of years later. They have active social, mnemonic and emotional roles to play in our lives, far beyond that which we are often aware of. Yet archaeologists have come up with a number of theories and ideas with which we can think better about how objects shape our lives, and how we can interpret them.

Archaeological studies of object attachment

Archaeological theories thus make it easier to understand how attachment objects come to be so significant. They carry deep meaning, and are active social and mnemonic beings, in turn providing an often intense emotional connection to loved ones and important memories. Such insights, it might be assumed, would be invaluable for an understanding of object attachment, helping us to understand that objects like Norris are not simple representations of our feelings, but active players in our social and emotional lives. Far more so than psychology or anthropology, archaeological theory can help us to better understand exactly *why* material culture, including attachment objects, is so powerful. From psychology and anthropology, we can gain a better understanding of what object attachment is and how it functions, but from archaeology, we can better understand why this matters.

With this in mind, it is surprising that archaeology has not chosen to interrogate this subject in more detail. Attachment theory is not entirely new to archaeology. It has, for example, been applied to analyses of infant death and burial (Cannon and Cook 2015). More recently, Büster (2021) has discussed the nature of our problematic attachments to things, but this paper

deals more with other people's objects which are being hidden away, rather than used regularly, and there is no use of attachment theory at all in this paper. I am interested in attachment objects, how they are used and how they affect people when they are alive, while Büster's paper considers what happens to the people left behind with these objects. This is still attachment, but from a slightly different perspective to my own.

Attachment theory is not the only way to study our socio-emotional attachments to objects, but it is surprising that there is so little prior research using this framework. It provides a unique opportunity to consider the concatenation of individual, cultural and biological factors involved in the attachment system in a way that other theories and ideas cannot manage alone. Balancing these factors is a difficult task, and one that archaeologists sometimes disagree over. DeMarrais (2011) has called for renewed attention to the shared nature of emotional experiences between members of a group, particularly how interactions shape individuals. Cannon and Cook (2015, 399), however, argue that a focus on the cultural nature of emotion "minimises the role of individual differences in emotional experience". They argue that attachment theory allows archaeologists to explain differences between individuals which in turn drive change in cultural practices more widely (Cannon and Cook 2015). As we have seen so far, attachment theory has the potential to unpick the different factors involved and the different scales at which attachment operates, helping us to understand how it functions on individual, cultural and biological bases. Such a framework is even more useful for archaeologists if we incorporate knowledge and research on the links between attachment and material culture. Attachment theory cannot explain everything about our emotional lives (Holmes and Farnfield 2014, 1), but it does provide a useful theoretical framework for the analysis of our relationship with material culture, and the ways in which this varies.

By using the framework of attachment theory, archaeologists may have the potential to start thinking about how object attachment may have been expressed in past societies. Taking the contextually specific, yet theoretically grounded, approach advocated by modern anthropology and archaeology enables us to begin thinking about the specific individual, cultural and social contexts in which object attachment is most likely to be expressed, yet in the past, rather than the present.

What do anthropology and archaeology tell us, and what questions remain unanswered?

Anthropology and archaeology can thus provide us with an understanding of object attachment in non-Western, non-industrialised societies, both today and in the past. With these disciplines, we can begin to build up from the basic framework provided by psychology, to gain broader insights into the nature of our relationship with material culture and the ways in which object attachment varies between different people, cultures, and societies across space and time.

At the end of the previous chapter, I raised three questions which remained unanswered. This chapter has explored what anthropology and archaeology have told us, and while these disciplines have potential to shape our understanding of object attachment, these three questions still remain.

How does object attachment vary?

Both anthropology and archaeology have the potential to help us understand the variability and depth of object attachment. However, neither currently provides much evidence, or methodologies, with which to begin doing so. This is clearly a gap I will need to fill in this thesis.

We can divide potential variation into three general categories: individual, cultural, and ecological or environmental. Individual variation encompasses demographic factors such as age, gender, relationship status, religious belief, and attachment style. Cultural variation is broader, encompassing cultural norms for attachment relationships and material engagement. Ecological variation is broader still, including the effects of large-scale environmental influences, particularly changes in the climate and environment.

These three categories show the complexity of attachment. It is not entirely individual, nor entirely cultural, and factors which at first seem unrelated, such as ecology, may in fact have extensive indirect impacts. In this thesis I will need to consider how different kinds of people react to attachment objects, how culture affects object attachment behaviours, and even whether large-scale environmental changes affect the use or characteristics of attachment objects.

Methods which help me to understand variation in object attachment will thus be a key part of the remainder of this research project. Ethnoarchaeological research will be invaluable, given that this approach can help us to look beyond the often Western bounds of psychological research, but also because there is to date no ethnoarchaeological research into object attachment. This will be an entirely new area of research, but one which may prove instrumental in shaping our understanding of attachment variation.

In doing so, this will allow for a better understanding of how different contextual factors shape and alter the prevalence of object attachment. This provides a better understanding of how object attachment varies in time, in space, and by culture. This will enable me to better understand both cross-cultural similarities and differences, to develop a better idea of what behaviours are universal, and which are culturally mediated. I am looking for a core set of human capacities related to object attachment, which are altered and amended by the factors mentioned above. Certain people might be more inclined to rely on attachment objects. Certain cultures might emphasise certain elements, and some cultures might emphasise others. Certain environments might make object attachment more common, and others less so.

This may, in turn, create opportunities for archaeologists to understand the types of environments and contexts in which object attachment is most likely, which may provide a starting point for archaeologists to understand where object attachment would have been beneficial, or a contextual benchmark against which we can test expectations for the archaeological record.

How does object attachment differ from other forms of engagement with material culture?

In this chapter, we have begun to think through the ways in which object attachment differs from other forms of material engagement. Attachment objects may be similar in form and function to other, non-attachment objects. An antique book, for example, may be a cherished reminder of the loved one who left it behind to one person, whereas a different antique book might be valued for its historical or financial value by someone else. Individual attachment objects themselves may even have multiple meanings and functions. A wedding ring, for example, may be an attachment object but it is also a clear indicator of one aspect of someone's identity and status, and a cultural marker of a particular social relationship. From

an archaeological perspective, these factors make it much harder to look for such objects as they might appear to be something else entirely.

We must also consider how attachment objects differ from gifts. Attachment objects can be gifts but are not necessarily so. Meaningful objects with no apparent palaeoeconomic function are often viewed as gifts, but this is perhaps naïve and obscures their potential origin. Furthermore, gift-giving is often seen as a purely practical transaction, rather than as an emotional engagement with another. How can attachment objects be incorporated into our ideas of gift-giving, as well as trade and exchange?

We thus require a better understanding of how object attachment differs from other forms of material engagement. In other words, how is object attachment different from the myriad of other ways in which humans use and derive meaning from objects? Particularly in the wake of the advent of post-processual theory in the 1980s and 1990s, archaeologists often speak of 'meaningful' or 'symbolic' objects, but these are not necessarily the same as attachment objects, though these categories can and do overlap. *All attachment objects are meaningful, but not all meaningful objects are attachment objects.* How do we separate the two? Can we separate them at all? It is important here that we are clear what object attachment is, but also what it is not, so that I do not conflate object attachment with other forms of material engagement.

The following chapters will consider this question in more detail. In this thesis, I have chosen to use both psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches to develop my understanding further. This will allow me to consider the links between form and function, and further interrogate if and how attachment objects' other functions affect their role as an attachment object. This will be further supported by considering the form of the objects themselves.

What are the characteristics of attachment objects?

Again, while anthropology and archaeology provide many ways to think about material culture, they tell us nothing yet about the actual characteristics of these objects. There are two main areas of interest here.

Firstly, there is the question of whether attachment objects share a common form, or physical similarities. I have written elsewhere that we might expect these objects to be soft and 'huggable' (Bell and Spikins 2018, 29), for example, but is this true? In this thesis, studying

attachment objects themselves may provide the opportunity to begin thinking not just about the effects of object attachment on humans, but also upon the material culture involved. For archaeologists, this is key, as material culture is what we depend upon to understand the past. If attachment objects share common characteristics, this would make it far easier to identify potential traces of object attachment in the past.

Similarly, it will help to try to understand better what effect object attachment has upon the objects themselves. Are there common ways in which humans engage with, and thus leave their mark upon, these objects? Might object attachment be clearly visible on the objects themselves? Again, for archaeologists, relying as they do on material culture, it seems important to consider how humans engage with these objects, both because it tells us a lot about the behaviour itself and because it may help us to identify objects most likely to have been used for attachment purposes.

This does not, however, mean that I am trying to *prove* that individual items in the archaeological record are attachment objects. Rather, it is important to consider the physicality of the objects in question, as there may be certain characteristics, whether it be in form, function, or something else entirely, which may mark out attachment objects from other kinds of objects. If we have certain characteristics which are then *not* seen at a particular site, this could then be taken as evidence that these objects were unlikely to be used for attachment purposes.

In this thesis, I will use both psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches to further interrogate some of these questions, in order to understand whether there are patterns or common characteristics seen among modern attachment objects. This will in turn enable me to think about the potential characteristics we might see in the archaeological record.

Summary

At the end of the first part of this thesis, we can begin to see what we currently know about object attachment, and what still remains to be understood. While psychology, anthropology and archaeology are not easy bedfellows, when combined they are more than the sum of their parts. Inter- or multidisciplinary projects are never easy; trying to combine disciplines with entirely different views of the world, and views on how to do research, is inevitably difficult. However, in combining these different disciplines, we can begin to understand

attachment on a deeper level, considering the intersection of biological, cultural and external factors, and acknowledging the important role of the material world. This combination of disciplines and approaches will allow me to understand object attachment on a cross-cultural level, making it more relevant for archaeologists.

In the second part of this thesis, I will detail the primary research undertaken in order to answer the questions outlined above. Consisting of both psychological and ethnoarchaeological research, I will consider how object attachment varies, both in individuals and cross-culturally, how object attachment differs from other forms of material culture, and whether attachment objects share any common characteristics. In doing so, I will be able to develop a series of expectations for the archaeological record, to be tested in the third and final part of this thesis.

Chapter 4

Psychological Approaches

Now that we have established a basic understanding of object attachment and set out some key remaining questions, it is time to undertake primary research to develop this understanding further. Given that the theory upon which this thesis is based originated in developmental psychology, I draw here from psychological approaches first. To more clearly outline what I set out to do, this mini-chapter discusses the aims and methods of my psychological research, as well as the limitations of this approach. This will then lead into the results of the research in the following chapter, written in the format of a paper for the *Journal of Material Culture*.

The psychological research undertaken here is in partial fulfilment of the second aim of this thesis: *to consider methodologies and approaches which might allow us to refine this understanding [of object attachment] and create expectations relating to the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record*. In the previous chapter, I noted three questions to be answered in this thesis: how object attachment varies, how object attachment differs from other forms of material engagement, and whether attachment objects share any common characteristics. The psychological research will, I hope, provide insights into all three of these areas.

Aims of the psychological research

The psychological research here has two major aims. Firstly, it will consider how object attachment varies by exploring whether there are certain personal or cultural factors which affect the likelihood of deriving comfort from an object. This includes factors such as attachment style, but will also consider demographic factors such as age and gender, which have not previously been studied with regards to object attachment behaviours.

The second aim of this research is to consider whether there are characteristics or behaviours which are especially common to attachment objects. This is an entirely new area of research; to date, there is no psychological research looking in detail at the characteristics of objects themselves, with the exception of some papers looking at anthropomorphic features. This research will go further, looking at the size, form and materials used, as well as considering how the objects themselves are used.

The overall aim of this research, then, is to better develop our understanding of how object attachment varies, and whether the objects themselves share any common characteristics or are used in similar ways. Given psychology's focus on people, this research provides a more rounded approach to object attachment, considering both the people and the objects on an equal footing. In doing so, it can shape archaeological understanding of our socio-emotional relationship with objects through a consideration of the objects themselves, not just the people making and using them.

Methods

Given the format of the next chapter, more detailed information on the specific methods used can be found there. Here I will briefly discuss these methods, in a more general way.

The psychological research for this thesis consists of two surveys and one set of interviews, full transcripts of which can all be found in Appendix 1. The two surveys were both run online through the Qualtrics website, and were advertised to the general public online, via email and social media, though it is likely that the vast majority of participants were University staff or students as much of the advertising took place through University channels. The first survey was one that I developed as part of an interdisciplinary research group at the University of York in 2017, which aimed to ask people about objects which were important to them. We had previously collected the data for a Festival of Ideas talk, but it was never analysed in any

detail, so I took the opportunity to analyse it more thoroughly. This survey attracted 120 responses. I then carried out a series of face-to-face interviews in summer 2019 (n = 29). The findings from these interviews and the first survey were then used to inform the creation of the second survey. The second survey took place in summer 2020, and was similar in form to the first survey, but with a more concerted focus on attachment objects. This survey attracted a much larger number of participants (n = 440), meaning that the total survey participants equalled 560, with an additional 29 interviews.

All three studies were broadly similar in their outlook. The surveys included several questions relating to demographic factors (age, gender, religious belief) and then a series of qualitative and quantitative questions about an object which was particularly important to them, with the option to add details of additional objects. Both surveys also measured participants' attachment styles using the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (version ECR-RS), devised by Fraley and colleagues (Fraley et al. 2011), a nine-question survey which provides a simple way of calculating an individual's degree of attachment anxiety and avoidance (Table 4.1). This survey is often used to test an individual's attachment style with regards to specific relationships (for example, with their mother, father, or romantic partner), but Fraley and colleagues have also advised that it can be used to analyse an individual's general attachment style, which is the purpose for which it was used here.

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about close relationships in general .	
Avoidance	It helps to turn to people in times of need.
	I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others.
	I talk things over with people.
	I find it easy to depend on others.
	I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.
	I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down.
Anxiety	I often worry that other people do not really care for me.
	I'm afraid that other people may abandon me.
	I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.

Table 4.1: The ECR-RS questionnaire. Respondents answer nine questions relating to close relationships in their lives, using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The first six questions relate to the degree of attachment avoidance, and the last three questions relate to the degree of attachment anxiety. The scores can then be averaged to determine an individual's degree of anxiety and avoidance.

This allowed me to gain an understanding of any possible links between participants' attachment styles, demographic details, and degree of object attachment. The questions

related to a specific object were used to gain a better picture of attachment objects as a whole, allowing me to consider whether they had any common characteristics.

The interviews were more informal in style, to facilitate conversation rather than look for specific answers. They did not include any demographic information but consisted of open conversations based on a common set of questions, about a particular object or objects (many of which participants chose to bring with them), in order to delve into more detail about some of the themes which had come up in the first questionnaire, and order to help me think about potential themes and characteristics to be mentioned in the final questionnaire. Altogether, all three studies allowed me to develop a better understanding of patterns of variation in object attachment, and to think about the objects themselves.

The methods used here, then, are explicitly psychological, and would be familiar to many social or developmental psychologists. However, the overall approach has been shaped heavily by archaeology, too, particularly work in Palaeolithic archaeology which increasingly focuses on the role of social relationships in the development of the human mind (as discussed in Chapter 3), and its emphasis on the integral role of material culture in doing so. This is not simply a method looking at the emotional side of the brain, but incorporates the social and material, too.

In carrying out this research, I provide more detailed insights into the specific factors influencing the expression of object attachment and the characteristics of the objects themselves. The use of psychological methods to answer archaeological questions is a powerful combination, creating a balance between people and objects that is not often found in psychology or archaeology alone.

Limitations and considerations for this approach

The limitations of each specific study are discussed in the next chapter, so I will not cover them again here. Instead, I will briefly discuss the limitations of the overall approach.

The findings here are just a snapshot of a small number of people at one point in time. While attachment is often treated as a static element of the mind, as noted in Chapter 2, attachment style can change to a limited degree, even in adulthood, so we must be aware of the limited nature of the attachment survey, though the degree of variation is unlikely to be large enough to change the results greatly. Furthermore, while I interviewed or surveyed almost 600

people, this is only a small sample of the general population. As such, these results cannot be said to stand for all Western cultures. However, this methodology is similar to many others used by psychologists and the findings are still useful, so this does not render any findings invalid; rather, this is simply a point to be aware of when extrapolating from the overall findings.

Another potential limitation of this approach is the use of modern psychological data for archaeological purposes. There is always going to be a risk in using psychological data to understand past minds, but without it we have a poor understanding of how the mind works, and we risk making unfounded assumptions about the brain. If I were to study humans' emotional relationships to objects without any understanding of the psychological background, this would be incredibly difficult.

Similarly, we are relying here on modern psychological data, which is often derived from WEIRD societies. As noted in previous chapters, this leads to an overly Western (and, more often than not, overly white) view of the mind, and alternative perspectives are necessary if we are to get a realistic understanding of how the mind works, and how material culture influences and shapes our cognition. From an archaeological perspective, particularly one interested in early prehistory, basing findings entirely on WEIRD data will lead to inaccurate conclusions about the nature of the human mind. As such, a psychological approach alone is not enough, and it must be undertaken in conjunction with ethnoarchaeological research. As a white/WEIRD researcher, I must also be aware of the bias inherent in using WEIRD participants, but also recognise my own personal biases and my own cultural background. The samples used in this data do not represent some 'dominant human norm' (Clancy and Davis 2019, 171).

Summary

The psychological research undertaken as a part of this thesis, in the form of qualitative and quantitative surveys and interviews, will shape my understanding of both the patterns of variation in object attachment and the common characteristics of the objects themselves. While the use of psychological approaches within archaeology is not without its criticisms and debate, it has a lot to offer, particularly in providing a basic framework upon which to build a deeper understanding of object attachment.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of my psychological research, in the form of a paper which has been submitted to the *Journal of Material Culture*.

Chapter 5

The Role of Cherished Objects as Attachment Figures

Abstract

Even mundane, everyday objects can have intense emotional significance to those who use them. Yet, archaeologists to date have largely ignored this emotional attachment to objects. This paper, based on the psychological theory of attachment, utilises quantitative and qualitative data from three surveys and interviews to analyse the factors affecting the expression of object attachment, as well as the most commonly associated characteristics and behaviours related to this capacity. In doing so, it becomes clear that object attachment is often the result of anxiety, both short- and long-term. Attachment objects themselves are incredibly diverse, yet there are several common features which unite them. These findings will be of use to archaeologists, or anyone studying material culture, interested in archaeological approaches to the materiality of emotion. It demonstrates that our attachment to objects is not childish or materialistic, but a key part of what makes us human.

Introduction

"My teddy was a gift given to me shortly after I was born, and as well as carrying him around (openly, more or less constantly) as a child, I've kept him and carried him (albeit more secretively)

into adulthood. After the birth of my son, I made a deliberate effort to find as close a match as possible to give to him, in the hope of being able to pass on to him the feeling of comfort and security that my own Teddy still imparts for me."

- *Anonymous study participant*

Why do humans become emotionally attached to inanimate objects? The idea that objects might provide support may seem strange on the surface. Yet certain objects have real emotional resonance for those who use them, providing comfort and security in times of need (Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Winnicott 1953).

The concept of 'object attachment' has received scant attention in the literature. This is puzzling, given that the theory of attachment, proposed by Bowlby and Ainsworth in the late 20th century, remains a key approach in developmental psychology. Attachment theory states that mammals are born with an innate attachment behavioural system, which leads them to seek proximity to others from the moment that they are born, resulting in social bonds with 'attachment figures' (Gillath, Karantzas and Lee 2019; Konok et al. 2016; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019). From an evolutionary perspective, such behaviour encourages closeness to their mother, protecting them from predators and helping the infant to survive (Bowlby 1984). The social support provided by attachment figures fosters a sense of security (a 'secure attachment style'), vital to physical and mental wellbeing. Without this support, individuals can develop an 'insecure attachment style', measured in relation to two dimensions, anxiety and avoidance, and split into three different categories: anxious, avoidant and disorganised, each of which have different impacts (Table 5.1) (Gillath, Selcuk and Shaver 2008; Konok et al. 2016; Reisz, Duschinsky and Siegel 2018; Shaver, Mikulincer and Cassidy 2019; Szepeswol and Simpson 2019).

Humans have a particularly broad attachment system. Research demonstrates that we can also become attached to nonhumans such as pets, places, deities and inanimate objects (Bagley and Gonsman 2005; Beck and Madresh 2008; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016; Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Hernández et al. 2007; Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001; Kirkpatrick 1998; Kurdek 2008; Kurdek 2009; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer and Shaver 2011; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer and Shaver 2012). The latter of these forms the focus of this paper.

Attachment style	Attachment figures	Anxiety	Avoidance	Effects
Secure	Sensitive and responsive	Low	Low	Positive view of self and others Engage in productive emotion regulation strategies
Anxious	Sporadic and unreliable care	High	Low	Negative view of self, positive view of others Hyperactive attachment system, compulsively seeks out care
Avoidant	Largely unresponsive	Low	High	Negative view of others Deactivated attachment system, strives for independence, uncomfortable with emotional closeness and commitment
Disorganised	Thought to be the result of neglect or trauma	High	High	Conflicted or apprehensive approach to caregivers Absence or breakdown of attachment strategies

Table 5.1: Different attachment styles and their effects on the individual.

Thus far, object attachment has received comparatively little attention. Yet this area is not entirely devoid of research. Douglas Winnicott (1953) coined the term ‘transitional objects’, objects which help infants to self-soothe after weaning. These have received much attention in the literature (Erkolahti et al. 2016; Garber 2019; Parkin 1999; Stagg and Li 2018), but object attachment post-childhood has received comparatively little. Where psychology does study attachments to objects, it is generally only concerned with unhealthy relationships with objects, such as hoarding, or with its relation to mental ill-health (Dozier et al. 2017; Hooley and Wilson-Murphy 2012; Mandel, Lisjak and Wang 2021; Neave et al. 2016; Nedelisky and Steele 2009; Norberg et al. 2018; Parrott 2010; Stephens, Cheston and Gleeson 2013). Object attachment is largely regarded as a temporary compensatory mechanism (Gardner, Pickett and Knowles 2005; Keefer et al. 2012; Niemyjska 2019, 281). Gardner, Pickett and Knowles (2005, 238), for example, call the use of objects ‘social snacking’, deeming it less satisfying than interpersonal relationships. The authors provide no explicit evidence for this statement, though, simply noting that “we suspect none are ultimately as satisfying or as healthy” (Gardner, Pickett and Knowles 2005, 238).

Less often considered is the impact that objects have in non-clinical, long-term and everyday settings, and the positive effects they can have on individuals. Lucas Keefer (Keefer et al. 2012,

2014; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Keefer 2016; Keefer and Rothschild 2020) is the most significant exception to this, having provided a much clearer insight into object attachment. He notes that object attachment appears to be a response to insecurity, uncertainty and change, particularly associated with those who are anxiously attached, who benefit most from the use of 'attachment objects' (Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer and Rothschild 2020).

A recent special issue in *Current Opinion in Psychology* suggests an increasing interest in this area. Yet the articles within this issue highlight that there is a huge divergence in approaches and definitions (Table 5.2). Definition is a recurring issue in attachment research (Prior et al. in prep), as these terms are used broadly by different subdisciplines of psychology and so focus on slightly different aspects of social relationships. Some of these terms use the word 'attachment' but are unrelated or only tangentially related to attachment theory, which confuses the matter further. However, within these different definitions (Table 5.2), there are clear commonalities: almost all mention social bonds, emotions, and feelings in some way. However defined, object attachment is clearly a concept with a socio-emotional basis.

Definition	Reference
"...the emotional connection felt by an individual toward an object, such that a sense of loss may be felt if the individual parts with it."	David et al. (2021, 1)
"...a psychological feeling that individuals experience toward a digital or physical good that is inanimate but can be infused with human or godlike qualities."	Mead and Baumeister (2021, 16)
"...notion of compensatory object attachment, in which one experiences a psychological or emotional bond toward an object that is motivated by compensatory consumption."	Mandel, Lisjak and Wang (2021, 55)
"...the psychological or emotional bond that individuals experience between their sense of self and an object."	Norberg and Rucker (2021, vi)
"...the strength of the bond we feel with a special, significant item that triggers emotions and evokes positive and protective behaviours."	Preston and MacMillan-Ladd (2021, 31)

Table 5.2: Different definitions of object attachment.

My research focuses on object attachment through the theoretical lens of attachment theory, and as such my definition of object attachment leans on definitions of attachment bonds such as those put forward by Ainsworth (1993) and Zeifman and Hazan (2016, 420–423). I therefore define an attachment object here as an inanimate object:

- Whose presence provides an individual with a sense of comfort and security
- Which is preferred by the individual over other objects

- Which the user chooses to rely upon for protection, or which they seek proximity to, in times of need
- To which the user feels some degree of distress upon separation or loss.

The current research

The study of object attachment is still in its infancy. There is clearly scope to seek out a conception of object attachment which can inform and be informed by attachment theory. This paper will explore two main questions.

What factors affect the likelihood of deriving comfort from an object?

As Keefer's research has shown, object attachment appears to be far more common in individuals with an anxious attachment style, and more research is needed to explore the link between attachment style and objects. We know little about whether people with the propensity for one type of attachment (such as pets or religious beliefs) have an increased likelihood of object attachment too, or indeed whether the use of one 'compensatory' attachment figure negates the need for others.

What characteristics and behaviours are most common with regards to attachment objects?

Psychology focuses more on people and less on objects, so is less interested in attachment objects themselves. From a material culture perspective, however, I am interested in how archaeologists can look for these objects in past contexts, so understanding common object characteristics will be invaluable. A previous paper (Bell and Spikins 2018) discussed potential common characteristics of attachment objects – in particular, small size, portability and softness – but this paper will allow me to interrogate these ideas in detail. I want to understand not just physical characteristics such as form and size, but also the ways in which people interact with these objects. This may be helpful in understanding how both object and user shape one another.

Methods

This paper is based on three studies, altogether comprising more than 500 high-quality responses on the subject of object attachment.

Study 1

The first study was undertaken between May and November 2017 by the 'Comforting Things' research group from the University of York. This study, funded by the University of York's Archaeology Research Priming Fund, aimed to gain qualitative data about objects to which individuals were attached, and the degree to which attachment style mediated self-reported object attachment. It was predicted that anxiously attached individuals were more likely to report attachment to an object, while there would be no discernible link between avoidant attachment and object attachment.

A public survey (Appendix 1) was run through Qualtrics and disseminated online via email and social media. Participants received no financial compensation. The survey was carried out with ethical approval from the University's Arts and Humanities Ethics Board (awarded May 2017). All participants gave consent for their responses to be anonymously analysed and disseminated.

To measure attachment style, we used the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (version ECR-RS) as devised by Fraley and colleagues (Fraley et al. 2011), using an updated 2014 version to determine their attachment style for relationships in general. The ECR-RS indicates the degree to which an individual is anxiously and avoidantly attached. While there will always be biases related to self-report measures, the ECR-RS measure is both simple to administer and effective, and has been found in independent meta-analyses to be a reliable measure of attachment (Graham and Unterschute 2015).

Participants were asked how often "cherished or familiar" objects provided comfort for them in times of stress, and to what extent "significant" objects in their life carried particular meaning. Both questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from Always to Never, with the first of these questions being used as a measure of object attachment. Participants were asked to talk about an object which comforted them or had special meaning, giving details as to what it looked like, why it was important and how they interacted with it. They also answered a question about what possession they would rescue from a home disaster.

Discounting participants who did not answer all the questions relating to attachment style or their particular attachment object (or lack thereof), there were 120 high-quality quantitative and qualitative responses. The age and gender breakdown of these responses can be found in Table 5.3. The qualitative responses from this study were partially included in a previous

paper (Bell and Spikins 2018), but the quantitative responses had not previously been analysed and have not been published elsewhere.

Demographic factor		Number of respondents
Age	18-24	46
	25-34	33
	35-44	7
	45-54	13
	55-64	15
	65-74	5
	75+	1
Gender	Female	89
	Male	29
	Gender-variant/non-conforming	2

Table 5.3: Age and gender breakdown of Study 1 participants (out of a total of 120 responses).

Study 2

The second study consisted of detailed qualitative interviews, aimed at gaining insight into the relationships that people have with personally significant objects. As this study was aimed more at deriving a set of more detailed responses to guide a further public survey, there were no particular hypotheses or predictions, but it was hoped that these interviews would allow me to identify common themes among objects to which individuals were attached.

29 interviews were carried out by the author over the course of August 2019, and were organised as an 'informal interview' on a 1:1 basis. Participants were recruited online via email and social media. All interviews took place in person, ranging in time depending on the participant: the shortest interview lasted just under four minutes, and the longest took half an hour. Participants received no financial compensation. The survey was carried out with ethical approval from the University's Arts and Humanities Ethics Board (awarded July 2019), and all participants gave consent for their responses to be anonymously analysed and disseminated. Transcripts of each interview can be found in Appendix 1. Each interviewee received their transcript and was able to make comments on it if wanted.

Participants were asked to think about an object which was important to them, or which had value to them. This instruction was left deliberately vague, to gain a better understanding of the different kinds of themes which arose in relation to personally significant material culture. Interviewees were asked to explain what the object looked like, how long they had had it and

whether there was a particular story behind it and why it was important to them. They were asked if and how they used the object, and how they would feel if it was lost or broken. After the first interview, I also added an additional question in which I asked them whether they considered themselves to be the kind of person who was attached to objects, as this had come up in the first interview and appeared pertinent to the research. Most participants went into considerable detail about the object or objects in question. In total, 29 individuals spoke about 44 objects; 15 respondents chose 1 object, 13 chose 2 and 1 chose 3. In some cases, I have classed sets of objects as 1 object, as they were talked about by the participant as a whole (for example, a set of books).

Study 3

The final study took place between June and July 2020. This study drew on insights from the previous two studies to create a broader qualitative and quantitative survey, to determine whether other attachment relationships had any relation to the propensity for object attachment. This survey was similar to Study 1 in the questions asked, but different in that not everyone who participated reported attachment to an object. Prospective participants were simply told that the survey concerned “people’s relationships with objects”. It was predicted that individuals with religious beliefs, pets or who lived alone would be more likely to report an attachment to objects.

This study was run through Qualtrics, and disseminated online via email and social media. Participants were offered the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw for one of two £25 shopping vouchers upon completion of the survey. The survey was carried out with ethical approval from the University’s Arts and Humanities Ethics Board (awarded June 2020). All participants gave consent for their responses to be anonymously analysed and disseminated.

Participants were asked demographic and personal questions, which also included questions about other potential attachment relationships (relationship status, household status, pets, religious beliefs). The demographic breakdown of these responses can be found in Table 5.4. Participants were asked whether they had an object which was particularly important to them – and if so, were asked to describe the object and why it was important. They were asked whether they felt an emotional connection to the object, whether it comforted them (if so, why and how), whether there was a story associated with the object, and whether the frequency of use had changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was the option to add

details of additional objects. Participants were also asked who or what they would turn to for comfort if having a bad day, whether they ever turned to a specific object or objects for comfort, and the closeness of their relationship with the main person who had brought them up (on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Very Close to Not Close). Finally, participants filled out the ECR-RS. In total, there were 440 responses.

Demographic factor		Number of respondents
Age	18-24	108
	25-34	165
	35-44	63
	45-54	51
	55-64	41
	65+	12
Gender	Female	312
	Male	105
	Non-binary	16
	Prefer to self-describe	2
	Prefer not to say	5
Relationship status	Single	124
	In a relationship	169
	Married	131
	Separated	2
	Divorced	8
	Widowed	1
	Other	5
Household status*	Alone	57
	With others	385
Pets	Yes	206
	No	234
Religious belief	Yes	323
	No	117

Table 5.4:

Demographic breakdown of Study 3 participants (out of a total of 440 responses). *2 individuals listed themselves as living both alone and with others – both of them noted that they were in long-distance relationships.

Results

All three studies found that an emotional reaction or attachment to objects, while not universal, is nonetheless very common. In Study 1, an overwhelming majority of participants reported finding objects comforting during times of stress at least some of the time (91.7%), with almost half noting that objects provided comfort during stress most of the time (47.5%). Study 1 was derived solely from participants who reported a relationship to a cherished or important object, yet in Study 3, which contained a more diverse set of respondents, the number of participants noting the importance of objects was still high. When asked whether

they had at least one object which was particularly important to them, the vast majority of participants did (77.5%, $n = 341$), with over 90% of those 341 respondents (93.3%, $n = 318$) reporting an emotional connection to at least one object. When asked whether the object brought them feelings of comfort (this took the form of two questions, which are combined here), the vast majority answered in the affirmative (84.75%, $n = 289$). Even counting respondents who did not list an object, almost two-thirds of all participants found comfort in a particular object (65.68%).

What factors affect the likelihood of deriving comfort from an object?

Two factors appear to influence the expression of object attachment: attachment style and the presence of change and uncertainty.

Attachment style

Study 1 found a moderate statistical link between attachment anxiety (as measured using the ECR-RS) and self-reported object attachment ($r_s = .235$, $p = 0.01$), but no relationship between attachment avoidance and object attachment. Similar results were observed in Study 3; participants were asked two questions ('If you were having a bad day, who or what would you turn to for comfort?' and 'Do you ever turn to objects as a source of comfort?'). For both questions, there was no correlation between attachment avoidance and self-reported use of objects, while there was a moderate positive correlation between attachment anxiety and use of objects (for the first question, $r_s = .207$, $p < 0.001$; for the second question $r_s = .241$, $p < 0.001$).

Change and uncertainty

External circumstances also appear to affect the expression of object attachment. One particular factor is change and uncertainty, with sentimental items used or cherished more at these times. In Study 1 most participants found objects comforting during times of stress, with more than half of all participants (57.50%, $n = 69$) stating that objects were useful at least half of the time.

Study 1 participants were also asked what object they might take from their house in the event of a disaster. Of the 121 participants who answered this question and the attachment scale question, 138 objects were mentioned. Around 1/5 of these objects were practical or functional items which participants noted would be invaluable for rebuilding their life after

such a disaster, such as bank documents and passports (20.17%, $n = 24$). Yet, most participants chose items with sentimental value. Photographs and photo albums were particularly popular, making up 28.57% of the objects listed ($n = 34$). Yet there was huge variety in the items mentioned, with teddy bears ($n = 20$, 16.81%) and jewellery ($n = 19$, 15.97%) all making up substantial minorities of the data.

Sentimental or cherished objects are not just used at times of catastrophe; life changes make them more likely to be used, too. In Study 2, for example, a number of participants clearly stated, without prompting, that their cherished object was used more during periods of change, such as a move to a different country. Many of the interviewees were individuals at the University who had moved to the UK from abroad. 8 of the 29 participants noted that having had to move frequently had changed their relationship with objects, causing them to reassess what was important. This caused them to keep only the most necessary or most important objects, meaning that those they kept were more significant. In some cases, interviewees had brought items to the UK which were a logistical inconvenience. One, for example, had brought her typewriter over, *“which was a hassle to use as a carry-on, but she was worth it.”*

Other attachment relationships

In contrast, however, there was no clear relationship between object attachment and other attachment relationships, as tested in Study 3. Religious individuals reported more often having a chosen object which was comforting (76.9%, versus 61.6% of non-religious individuals). A chi square test showed this to have a statistically significant correlation ($X^2 = 8.94$, 1 d.f., $p = 0.003$), although the effect size was weak ($\Phi = 0.143$). Yet, while higher proportions of religious individuals reported turning to a specific object as a source of comfort (46.15% religious, 37.46% non-religious), there was no statistically significant relationship between these measures. Further studies must ask more specific questions about the nature of religious practice, as the questions asked here did not capture the nuances of religious belief (for example, the difference between practicing and non-practicing believers).

Pet owners reported using an object for comfort or finding an object comforting more than people without pets, but this was not statistically significant. I also tested for household status (alone versus with others), and here there was little difference in the proportions of those using objects for comfort. Household status has a statistically significant link with avoidance

but not anxiety, so it is unsurprising that there is no link. Again, though, future studies should look at this in more detail, as the large proportion of University students in this body of data may have made these questions more difficult to answer (due to their effectively being in 2 households).

Interestingly, relationship status had no statistically significant effect on respondents' propensity to find their chosen object comforting or to use an object for comfort when having a bad day. However, when asked the question of whether they ever turn to a specific object as a source of comfort, there was a statistically significant relationship, with single individuals and those in a relationship most likely to reply in the affirmative, and married and divorced individuals least likely to ($\chi^2 = 17.608$, 3 d.f., $\Phi = 0.202$, $p = 0.001$). Married individuals may be more likely to feel secure in a long-lasting relationship and thus have less need for an object, or it may simply be that married couples are more likely to live together, thus negating the need for attachment objects. The divorced result may be explained by the fact that divorced participants in this study were by far the least anxious participants (mean anxiety score 2.58 compared to an overall average of 3.94).

If anything, many of the above factors indicate the strength of the effect of anxious attachment.

What characteristics and behaviours are most common with regards to attachment objects?

Trends in form

It was predicted that attachment objects were more likely to be small, portable items, in order to allow them to be carried around more often. This was supported by the data; one particularly common characteristic among the objects in all three studies was their portability. Most of the items noted as significant were small and easily carried or worn, such as jewellery and soft toys. However, as mentioned by the individual who took their typewriter abroad, larger objects may be made portable, in spite of the difficulties involved in doing so.

The objects themselves showed a combination of cultural trends and unique objects. In Study 1, jewellery and teddy bears/soft toys were by far the most common individual object types (representing 35% and 21.67% of responses respectively), but 'Other' objects which were less easily categorised comprised almost a quarter of all objects (24.17%). Study 3 (Figure 5.1)

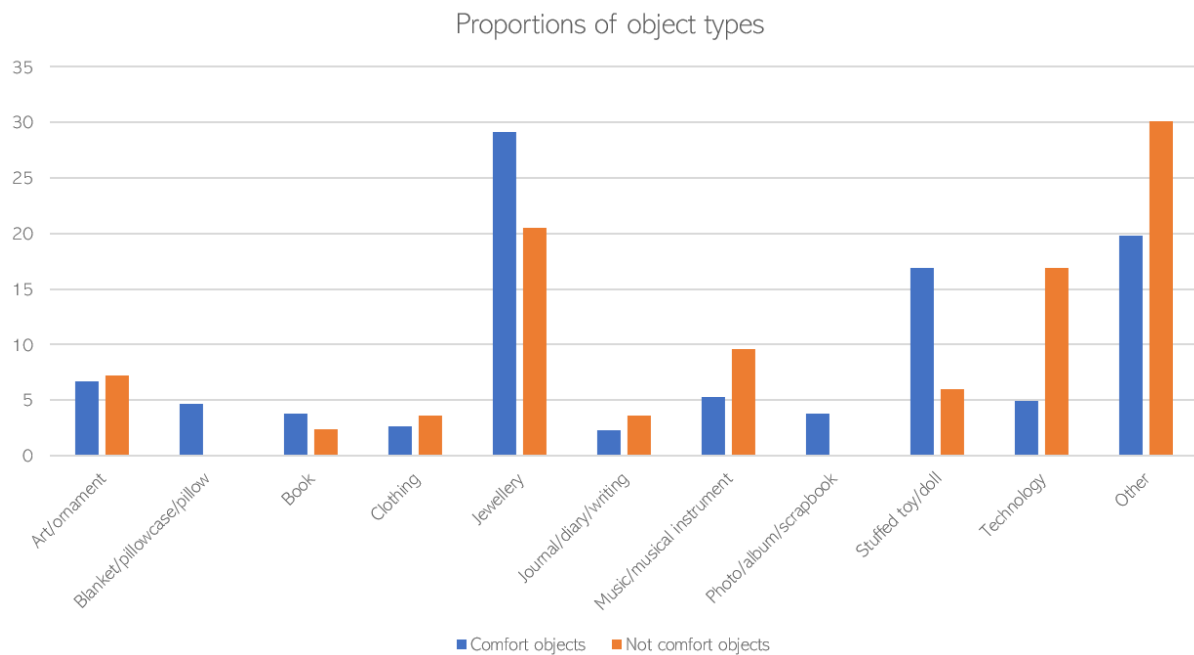


Figure 5.1: A comparison of object types in Study 3, comparing objects which participants noted brought to them, with those that did not.

shows a similar trend, with jewellery and stuffed toys being very common comforting object types, though Other is also extremely common, comprising almost 20% of comfort objects. There appears to be a little more adherence to cultural trends in the choice of comfort objects, as Other is even more common among non-comforting objects, but Figure 5.1 demonstrates that comforting objects can come in a variety of forms.

Social and mnemonic significance

In Study 1, an overwhelming majority of respondents (95.8%, $n = 115$) noted the mnemonic significance of their chosen object. Over 70% of all participants noted that their object was important as a reminder of a loved one (71.67%, $n = 86$) and in Study 2, the social significance of the object was the most mentioned reason (in 24/44 objects by 17/29 participants, 58.6%). Similarly, 13 of the objects mentioned (29.5%) were linked to positive memories. In Study 3, the most common reason given for an object's importance was as a reminder of another person ($n = 233/426$, 54.69%), although this includes objects not deemed comforting. In total, for all objects in Study 3 the majority – 71.6% ($n = 305/426$) – of all objects were important in some way because of their mnemonic significance. Participants who found an object comforting were more inclined to give the object some kind of mnemonic significance; the most common reason given for finding an object comforting was again as a reminder of

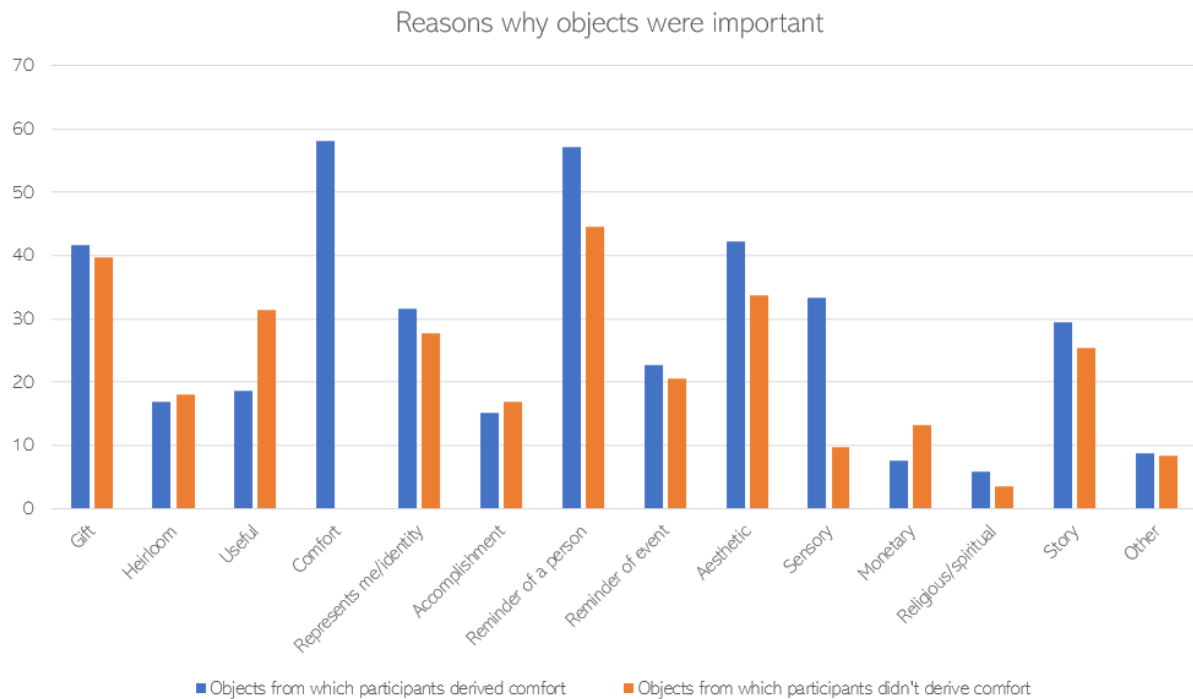


Figure 5.2: A comparison of the reasons behind the importance of objects chosen in Study 3, comparing objects which bring comfort to their user with those which do not.

another person ($n = 196/343$, 57.14%) and altogether, mnemonic reasons were mentioned for 72.89% ($n = 250/343$) of comforting objects.

Part of the social significance of many of these objects comes from the fact that they are commonly gifts or heirlooms. In Study 1, of the 120 respondents who mentioned a significant object, 53 (44.2%) explicitly mentioned that the item was a gift or had been inherited. The actual proportion of objects which were gifts is likely higher, as this includes only those who explicitly mentioned that the object was a gift or heirloom. In Study 2, 63.6% of objects ($n = 28/44$, from 24/29 respondents) were received as a gift or were representative of another person. In Study 3, 58.45% of objects ($n = 249/426$) were explicitly noted as being important *because* they were a gift or heirloom, though again the genuine proportion is likely higher. If we look at Figure 5.2, we can see that both comforting and non-comforting objects are significant as gifts and heirlooms, suggesting that the social aspect of important objects is significant, whether comfort is involved or not.

Sensory benefits

Based on previous research (e.g., Bell and Spikins 2018; Mahalski, Silva and Spears 1985; van Horen and Mussweiler 2014) we hypothesised that comforting objects would be soft, enabling a comforting haptic engagement. This was not supported by the data. Sensory engagement

with these objects is important, though softness is not. The vast majority of objects were not soft, and even 'hard' objects were touched or used often.

In Study 1, three-quarters of respondents listed touch as one of the ways in which they derived comfort or meaning from their object ($n = 80/107$, 74.76%) though many of the objects were hard. In Study 3, 22.3% ($n = 92/426$) of objects were noted as important due to their sensory factors, and among individuals who explicitly noted that they gained comfort from their object and gave a detailed explanation as to why, sensory benefit was one of the most common reasons for doing so, second only to being a reminder of another person – more so than among objects which did not provide any sort of comfort.

The above only mentions individuals who noted that the object was important *specifically* because of its sensory qualities. Yet the vast majority of those who found comfort from their object either visually or physically engaged with the object in order to derive comfort from it ($n = 559$, 83.18%). When participants were asked explicitly if they relied on a specific object for comfort (Table 5.5), 47.6% ($n = 99$) of such objects were soft or sensory in some way (such as bedding, clothing, a stuffed toy, or jewellery); this is, however, likely to be an underestimate of the total number of sensory objects used for comfort, as some people may have chosen not to mention this, or indeed might be unaware of the physical significance of their object. Study 3 included a question about how participants gained comfort from their object (if it was comforting) (Table 5.5). This was split into 5 categories: I look at it; I touch it; I use it; I think about it; Other. Of 337 objects, 62.61% ($n = 211$) were touched.

How do you gain comfort from this object?	Total objects
I look at it	203
I touch it	211
I use it	145
I think about it	98
Other	15

Table 5.5: Ways in which Study 3 participants derived comfort from an object. Note that for many objects, more than one method was chosen.

Touch is not the only sense, however – an almost equal amount (60.23%, $n = 203$) noted that they derived comfort from looking at the object. Using the object, too, could easily be construed as sensory, but even if we don't include this, a total of 281 objects – 83.38% – were related to touch or sight.

On the topic of sight, photographs and photo albums were one of the most common object types of choice in the studies discussed here, even more so for comforting objects. In Study 1, sight was a major factor in the significance of objects chosen ($n = 72/107$, 67.29%). Visual prompts are quick and easy reminders of important people or events (Gardner, Pickett and Knowles 2005, 233), and in Study 3, the way an object looked was mentioned even more often than other sensory factors.

Unique value

As has already been mentioned, unique objects, i.e., those which cannot easily be categorised, were common among objects which conferred comfort. This uniqueness appears to be expressed in two possible ways: uniqueness of form, or in the value they have for their owner.

Many participants noted a kind of ineffable essence making each object uniquely valued and valuable. In Study 3, for example, one person noted, with regards to a childhood teddy bear:

"The teddy looks quite worn and tatty, but I am reluctant to try and repair or re-stuff it in case it becomes damaged, but also because it is a very unique object and some of its character would be lost. It may also feel less familiar to me if I made repairs to it."

In this case, the object would physically be the same object if repaired, but if this were to happen the object would lose something of its importance, character, and familiarity. Objects are thus perceived to be irreplaceable, or worth a great deal, regardless of actual monetary value. Study 2 explicitly asked interviewees how they would feel if the object they had chosen was lost or broken, and responses were largely uniform; most interviewees reported overwhelmingly negative reactions such as 'devastated' ($n = 6$), 'heartbroken' ($n = 4$) and 'guilty' ($n = 3$). Of the 29 interviewees, only three said that they would not be bothered by the loss of their object. Yet, of these three, one had already lost an older version of that object so said they would not be so upset the second time, and another later noted that they did not know where their object (a mug) was at that moment, and that it was actually bothering them slightly. Interestingly, across the studies, a number of participants noted that they had not realised how important an object was until it was lost or broken. One interviewee in Study 2 talked about their engagement ring, which had been damaged by a jeweller: *"...it has tarnished it in a way, in a big way...it took somebody else damaging it, for me to realise just quite how much it did mean to me."*

Part of the reason that these objects may be perceived as so unique and valuable may be the length of ownership. In Study 1, 64 of the 120 respondents (53.3%) mentioned that their object had been with them from childhood, or reminded them of their childhood. In Study 2, participants were asked about how long they had owned or had a relationship with the object. Most objects had been owned for at least five years (82.2%), with 57.8% owned for longer than 10 years or since childhood. Interestingly, eight of the objects mentioned were deemed to be personally significant specifically because they had been owned for so long, suggesting that the length of the relationship is a significant factor in its own right. Thinking back to the social and mnemonic significance of these objects, the length of ownership may be a factor behind why such objects are so socially and mnemonically evocative.

Discussion

Factors increasing object attachment

The studies above make it clear that object attachment is far more ubiquitous than is often assumed by other researchers. However, there are two factors which increase the likelihood of object attachment even further: dispositional and situational anxiety.

Dispositional anxiety: Anxious attachment

More clearly than any other factor, object attachment was seen more often in individuals who were more anxiously attached. This matches what has been observed in other studies (Keefer et al. 2012; Kings, Moulding and Knight 2017; Neave et al. 2016), but it may be interesting to discuss the mechanisms behind this. Anxiously attached individuals have a strong desire to seek out social bonds to provide them with a sense of security that they otherwise lack. Such individuals feel insecure more often, likely leading them to utilise a wider variety of sources of attachment to bolster their security.

Inanimate objects may be particularly effective attachment figures as they do not carry the risk of rejection that anxiously attached individuals may expect from other people. Unlike people, objects are controllable and predictable. Anxious individuals, who expect attachment figures to be only sometimes reliable, thus benefit from a source of attachment which never wavers. A recent paper supports this, noting that anxiously attached individuals benefit more than others from the use of objects as a source of comfort and security (Keefer and Rothschild 2020).

Avoidantly attached individuals, on the other hand, are less inclined to rely on others, perceiving emotional closeness as a sign of weakness, so much so that even inanimate objects may be unappealing. Furthermore, avoidant individuals are more likely to respond to threats with denial or dissociation reactions (Kim et al. 2020), so they may not derive comfort from objects during difficult times because they deny and push away feelings of insecurity altogether.

Situational anxiety: Change and uncertainty

Research has tended to focus on long-term attachment anxiety as a factor in object attachment, but the studies here show that short-term anxiety is also influential, particularly in the form of change and uncertainty. Uncertain circumstances often increase anxiety and stress, so it makes sense that this would increase object attachment.

The studies here demonstrate that individuals consciously use particular objects to mediate feelings of insecurity or uncertainty, as well as scenarios involving great change, which Gardner, Pickett and Knowles (2005, 236) refer to as times of 'heightened belonging needs'. These objects provide an anchor to familiar people, places or memories which provide security amid short-term situations which threaten it.

Common characteristics of attachment objects

We can also begin, for the first time, to think about what unites attachment objects themselves: in other words, the common characteristics of attachment objects.

Portability

I had predicted that small, portable items would be common. Yet it is apparent that it is not necessarily size which distinguishes attachment objects, but their ability to be moved. As noted by some of Study 2's participants, even large objects can be made portable if necessary.

Being able to move, carry or wear an object easily means that the user can take it with them wherever they want, ensuring they have it close at hand and can thus benefit from it whenever needed. Even in scenarios of change and uncertainty, these objects provide an anchor to familiarity.

Sociality and mnemonic value

These objects often have social links, either as a gift or as a reminder of someone important. As one participant in Study 1 noted about the significance of important objects in their life: *"They're always to do with people, Objects by them self [sic] never really mean anything, but when they come from people who care about you, they mean so much more."*

The length of relationship with the object may be a factor here; a long relationship may create a stronger attachment through familiarity. Indeed, most of the objects mentioned in the studies here had been owned for years. As the object is relied upon time after time, it first acts as a reminder of a loved one, a meaningful place or some other significant memory, but over time comes to be associated mainly with powerful feelings of comfort and security, without needing to evoke the original memories or relationships.

Sensory value

A common factor among many of these objects is their sensory value, particularly touch. I previously predicted that attachment objects would commonly be soft, 'huggable' items (Bell and Spikins 2018). Yet while comfort is often gained from touching these objects, softness is not a prerequisite. Many of the objects listed here were clearly not soft at all. Previous studies of interpersonal attachment demonstrate that touch is an extremely powerful promoter of attachment security (Duhn 2010; Jakubiak and Feeney 2016a), but softness alone is not.

Related to the social and mnemonic value of these items, even looking at these objects is an important tool for deriving comfort and security. This may be in part why photographs were chosen so frequently throughout these studies; looking at a photo can bring up a myriad of familiar, comforting memories. There is clearly a link between object attachment and the senses, particularly touch and sight, with these objects providing comfort through sensory engagement. Over time just touching or looking at these objects may bring the user feelings of comfort and security, without needing to think about the memory associated with the object in the first place. This mirrors security priming studies of interpersonal relationships, where even the mere thought of a loved one provides comfort (Jakubiak and Feeney 2016b). It appears that the social and mnemonic value of these objects can be prompted by sensory engagement with them.

Uniqueness

What makes attachment objects so difficult to study, yet so interesting, is their variability and uniqueness. This uniqueness comes in two forms. There is the uniqueness of the object itself; anything can become an attachment object, as we see from the variability in object types in these studies. There is also the unique value that these objects hold for those using them. Even if they might appear unimportant to others, these objects have some kind of 'ineffable essence' which makes them unique to their owner and which far exceeds any utilitarian or monetary value. Again, this uniqueness is likely increased by the length of the relationship with the object, which is often a long-standing one.

Why can objects be such effective sources of support?

It may seem strange, at first, that inanimate objects provide security like that derived from other people. However, Seppala et al. (2013, 414) have noted that the *perception* of support, not necessarily the support itself, is incredibly important in understanding the efficacy of attachment figures. From this, we can see why objects are so useful to some people. Though they are inert, they are *perceived* to be useful. They can make us feel safer and more secure, promoting independence and autonomy by enabling separation from loved attachment figures. This perception translates itself into increased attachment security, with actual emotional and physical benefits in the long run. They are effective precisely because we believe that they make us feel secure.

While attachment objects are different from human attachment figures in that they cannot actively provide us with care, there is little doubt that they can provide us with similar emotional support. In some ways, the inert nature of these objects may actually be in their favour. As non-judgemental, predictable, and controllable entities, attachment objects may provide a feeling of reassurance and certainty, particularly for those who may perceive the people in their lives to be unreliable or unpredictable. They will always be there (unless lost or broken) and provide a consistent source of support which becomes uniquely meaningful over time.

Many of the common characteristics above support this idea. Portable objects are easy to wear or carry, and in doing so people derive sensory benefits from being frequently or constantly in contact with them. They are close at hand when needed, whether frequently or at times of heightened insecurity. They may provide comforting memories of other

attachment figures, events, or memories, and again this is something that the user has more control over in comparison to human attachment figures. Relationships with attachment objects are often developed over long periods of time, allowing an individual to engage with this object on a regular basis, so in time the object comes to be important and unique in and of itself. Over time the object can take on a new level of importance and meaning, giving the user a unique and enduring source of security.

Limitations and future directions

This paper has gone some way to answering questions about the nature of object attachment. However, further research is needed, particularly to counter the limitations of these studies.

Studies 1 and 3 were dominated by young, female participants, which may have had some effects on the findings, particularly as women and young people are more likely to be anxiously attached (Keefer and Rothschild 2020) and thus experience object attachment. Similarly, the samples here are all from Western populations, which will make the results less representative. More representative samples are needed in future studies. As part of my doctoral research, however, I am also conducting ethnoarchaeological analyses which provide a complementary perspective of object attachment.

Study 3 was also undertaken during a coronavirus lockdown in the UK in 2020, which may have influenced the results. Preliminary studies on the effects of the pandemic suggest increased loneliness and anxiety, and thus potentially an increased prevalence of object attachment (Lee 2020; Liu et al. 2020). It will be interesting to see future publications considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our relationships with objects.

Another factor which may also have had an impact on the results seen here is differing social and cultural attitudes to emotional attachment. The relationship between people and their attachment object is often a private one, making it possible that some of those in the studies outlined here did not want to talk about their object, or gave less detail than needed. People are sometimes loathe to be perceived as attached to an object: some participants here noted that their attachment was either embarrassing or could be perceived as embarrassing. The self-report measures used here have their limits. While some people are happy to open up about potentially 'embarrassing' relationships with objects, others are not – the latter, I

suspect, will consist particularly of avoidant individuals. This may be part of the reason why we see so little relationship between avoidance and object attachment – it may be that they are simply not attached to objects, but there may also be an unwillingness to admit to it. It is also apparent that people are not always aware of their attachment to objects; even if an object is important, they do not realise how important it is until it is lost, broken or damaged. I suspect that much attachment behaviour is largely unconscious, and we may not realise how much we rely on objects, so the findings here may be an underestimate of the prevalence of object attachment. Also affecting this potential underestimate is the fact that, in these studies, we asked people to discuss one object which was important to them. An individual might have an object which could be defined as an attachment object, but they may have chosen in my studies to discuss another object entirely, which was important for entirely different reasons.

One remaining question concerns the nature of the comfort derived from these objects. Are they comforting in themselves because of their touch or feel, or are they comforting because of memories? Is the idea of comfort too simple? The very notion of comfort is a vague one, and it is likely that participants have different conceptions of what comfort is. Comfort needs to be more clearly defined. Some may associate comfort with the kind of relationship a child has with an important object, some might associate it with a physiological sensation, and for some it might be more concerned with connection to others. This is something to remember in future studies. In Study 1, for example, one of the questions was 'How often do cherished or familiar objects provide comfort for you in times of stress?' and participants' conception of the word 'comfort' would have affected their answer to this question. Future studies should consider whether a more specific explanation of the term comfort might be helpful – or indeed, whether a broader conception of comfort is in fact useful.

Conclusion

These results support existing research showing that attachment anxiety is a major factor in the expression of object attachment. Yet these studies also challenge some of the existing literature, in that we can see that object attachment is almost ubiquitous, and is far more prevalent in the general population than is widely assumed. Both situational and dispositional anxiety appear to increase feelings of emotional attachment to an object, but object attachment is a common occurrence, not just a result of anxiety, stress, or uncertainty.

As such, this is a concept which may prove extremely interesting for any researcher interested in material culture. The attachment system is one shared by all humans, though within it we see a great deal of variability. There are clear characteristics marking out attachment objects, but within this there is a great deal of diversity, both in the types of objects and the people who rely upon them. Object attachment thus provides a fascinating insight into the socio-emotional effects of everyday material culture.

Chapter 6

Ethnoarchaeological Approaches

The previous chapter further developed our understanding of the psychological basis for object attachment, and the ways in which it varies. Attachment anxiety appears to be a major factor in the expression of object attachment, but object attachment is, in general, far more prevalent than is widely assumed. Furthermore, attachment objects themselves appear to have a number of similarities worthy of further study. However, the psychological studies undertaken here were all undertaken by WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) participants, so questions remain as to whether this pattern might hold up cross-culturally. Accordingly, in this chapter I will outline the ethnographic approach used within this thesis, before moving on to discuss the findings of the research itself in the next chapter.

Aims of the ethnoarchaeological research

As with the psychological research, the ethnoarchaeological approach here comprises part of the second aim of this thesis: *to consider methodologies and approaches which might allow us to refine this understanding [of object attachment] and create expectations relating to the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record*. More specifically, of the three remaining questions which need to be answered by this thesis – how object attachment varies, whether attachment objects share any common characteristics, and how object attachment differs

from other forms of material engagement – the ethnographic research most clearly relates to the first of these, though it may also touch on the other two.

As noted previously, from an archaeological perspective, a reliance on psychological approaches alone is inadequate and unrepresentative of humans as a whole. To get a better understanding for the variation within object attachment behaviours, a broader cultural study is required. Thus, the ethnoarchaeological research undertaken for this thesis considers how people in two Alaska Native cultures relate or related to material culture. This includes a consideration of whether they were emotionally attached to objects in any way; if so, what were these objects, and if not, why not? In doing so, this research will provide a broader perspective on how object attachment and its associated behaviours and material culture vary in humans, allowing me to focus in on the contextual factors which encourage or inhibit the capacity for object attachment.

Methods

This research focuses on two Alaska Native nations, the Iñupiat and the Yup'ik, both traditional hunter-gatherer groups with a history in the region stretching back hundreds or even thousands of years. I chose these two nations as they are nations for which we have a comprehensive literary and material record stretching back hundreds of years, as well as cultural continuity to the present day. As a result of the communities themselves increasingly playing a key role in the research process, there is now a large amount of literature covering many areas of life which were omitted from early ethnographic accounts, which tended to be oversimplified and sometimes outright racist. As the paper which forms the next chapter covers the cultural background of these two nations in more detail, I will omit further details here to avoid repetition.

I will draw upon primary research undertaken in the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) at the Smithsonian Institution in the United States. I will consider how the Iñupiat and the Yup'ik interacted with the material culture around them, focusing particularly on figurative representations. Such representations are often referred to as 'dolls', which most people equate with 'toys', though this oversimplifies the many roles and meanings that dolls hold in the lives of the humans that use them.

In both January and March 2020 (before the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed my data collection), I analysed 62 figurative representations of either people or animals, most listed in the collections catalogue as dolls, charms, or amulets. These objects came in a variety of forms, styles, and materials, and had a range of different functions. I studied the objects themselves, from the physical form to the patterns of polish on them, as well as the information provided regarding their provenance and interpretations. Details and drawings of all these figurines can be found in Appendix 2. The studies of these objects were bolstered by evidence gained from a thorough literature review drawing upon ethnographies of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik nations, including the testaments and literature written by these nations themselves. This literature review provided a great deal of social, cultural, and environmental context which allowed me to better understand how dolls fitted into their lives.

As such, the ethnographic research does not aim to identify evidence of object attachment in these cultures. Rather, it aims to understand how people relate to material culture in two Alaska Native cultures, to develop an understanding of variation in object attachment. These findings cannot be used to generalise about all non-Western cultures (to do so would be inaccurate but, more importantly, offensive) but instead provide me with a broader understanding of material relations in different contexts, particularly contexts which are particularly socially communal.

This part of my research will also allow me to test the limits of the material evidence. Archaeology is, by virtue of the time periods it studies, working with that which has been left behind and often buried in the ground for long periods of time. Even when we have the objects themselves, we miss a great deal of useful contextual information that can help us to understand them. A good example of how ethnographic studies can shed new light on the significance of material culture comes from González-Ruibal, Hernando and Politis' (2011) study of arrows made by the Awá (Guajá), a hunter-gatherer group from Brazil. They noted that the persistence of arrow production and use, though threatened by the increasing use of shotguns for hunting, reflects neither entirely functional nor symbolic meanings alone. Instead, these arrows were interwoven with male identity and the security of its link to the pre-contact world, taking on greater prominence once traditional ways of life were threatened (González-Ruibal, Hernando and Politis 2011, 15). In an archaeological culture, such insights would be invisible; ethnoarchaeological research helps us to consider new and broader ways of thinking about and interpreting material culture.

Similarly, in the case of object attachment, we do not currently understand the effects that object attachment has on the objects. Thus, considering how people in more recent cultures engage emotionally with objects, and what traces this leaves on the objects themselves, may provide useful insights into the physical aspects of object attachment, and provide a useful source of information when trying to study object attachment in much more distant temporal contexts.

Limitations and considerations for this approach

Some of the limitations of ethnoarchaeological approaches were discussed in Chapter 3, but it may be useful to reiterate some of the points made with respect to this specific project. The major point to be made is ensuring that my use of ethnographic data is respectful. I need to take care to ensure that I do not take an overly Westernised view of the cultures being studied, and do not exoticise these cultures. Furthermore, this project does not, and should not, treat the Western sample derived from the psychological data, and the Alaska Native nations discussed in the next chapter, as opposites. Human culture is not a spectrum with Western cultures at one end and non-Western Indigenous cultures on the other; instead, we should see these as unique ways of living and thinking. The very terms 'Western' and 'Indigenous' themselves obscure a great deal of intracultural variability, so assuming that my psychological sample represents all Western cultures, and my ethnographic sample represents all Indigenous cultures, would be a mistake. In an ideal world, I would be able to investigate a far broader range of Indigenous cultures to get a better understanding of object attachment across different cultures, but unfortunately the scope of this project, as well as the almost total lack of ethnographic research into object attachment, means that this is not possible. That said, this would be a promising avenue for future research.

I also need to be careful to ensure that this research does not comprise a search for material correlates of object attachment in the ethnographic record – in other words, trying to definitively identify any particular object as an attachment object. Instead, drawing on both psychological and ethnographic data demonstrates different ways in which humans interact with material culture, and the different meanings, forms, and functions that emotionally significant objects may have. The strength of this approach – and the strength of ethnoarchaeological approaches generally – lies in its ability to broaden our horizons and teach us about the variation within human life, including how this affects their relationship

with one another, and with material culture. Ethnoarchaeology, being as it is based heavily on analogical inference, cannot *prove* the existence of object attachment in the past. However, it will help me to gain insights into the causal mechanisms involved in object attachment, ensuring that I have a better understanding of the contexts in which we do and do not appear to see object attachment behaviours, why this may be, and how it affects the objects themselves.

There are also points to be considered more specifically for this project. The study of small-scale societies by Western researchers is not enough, particularly as these societies have traditionally had little to no say in the literature relating to their own culture. There is a real need to engage more with the individuals and communities in question (Clancy and Davis 2019, 181). In this case of this project, while I did consider contacting the communities in question, I was advised by Dawn Biddison, a curator at the Arctic Studies Center, that this would not be appropriate due to issues of cultural sensitivity including, understandably, the need to respect their privacy and the need to work with these cultures on a more long-term basis.

However, Dawn Biddison and Aron Crowell, both of whom have worked directly with Alaska Native cultures, provided me with papers, articles and project websites which had been created by or in conjunction with Indigenous scholars, communities, and elders. The Arctic Studies Center, for example, has set up a website which includes pictures of objects alongside the transcripts of interviews with elders. These transcripts provide a wealth of information about Alaska Native lifeways gained from the insights of the very people within these cultures. This, of course, is not perfect, but given the limited amount of time that I was in the US for my research, and the limited time I had to engage with the ethnographic side of my research (particularly given that primary data collection was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic), this was the most appropriate compromise.

However, it must be remembered, that these cultures are not unchanging. They have had a myriad of effects on one another and contact with Euro-American explorers, not to mention the overwhelmingly negative effects of colonialism, over the last couple of hundred years has also led to much change. This is something that I will have to consider carefully in my approaches, both to ethnographies of these cultures and the testimonies of current Alaska Native communities.

In short, my ethnoarchaeological research will not be able to cover everything. It is a short-term project focusing on one area of material culture, in two specific nations, in one area of the world. However, as with ethnoarchaeology in general, I believe that the limited nature of this research is not necessarily a downside, as I am not looking for material correlates of object attachment in the ethnographic record. Instead, studying two nations entirely different from those in the psychological data will broaden my horizons and give me a greater understanding of how humans engage with material culture, both socially and emotionally. It will provide a counterbalance to the psychological data, which comprises an overwhelmingly Western sample. However, the ethnoarchaeological approach here is not simply about balancing my findings out against Western data. The ethnoarchaeological data here will be an invaluable and unique source of insight, demonstrating how people interact with specific objects, and why certain objects come to be socially and emotionally significant.

Summary

Ethnoarchaeology continues to be the subject of theoretical and methodological controversies within the discipline of archaeology. Yet it clearly has value, and its use in archaeology goes from strength to strength, bolstered by current approaches to the ethnographic record which are altogether more ethical, more thoughtful, and more enlightening.

In the next chapter, which takes the form of a paper which will be submitted to the *Journal of Material Culture*, I will discuss the ethnoarchaeological research I undertook, the results of this research, and its implications for both archaeology and attachment theory. This leads on into the final part of the thesis, which considers how the psychological and ethnoarchaeological research might allow us to develop expectations for the archaeological record, before considering a Case Study to test these expectations.

Chapter 7

An Ethnoarchaeological Approach to the Study of Object Attachment

Abstract

Our emotional attachment to objects is a relatively new area of study, particularly within archaeology and anthropology. Psychological research on this subject has tended to focus particularly on Western relationships, and what research there is, is largely conducted in industrialised nations. This has resulted in a conception of object attachment which does not reflect the true breadth of human relationships. This paper discusses how we might develop a less ethnocentric perspective of humans' emotional relationships with material culture by exploring the experience of object attachment among two Alaska Native nations: the Iñupiat and Yup'ik. This research reveals that their capacity for object attachment has not been expressed in the same way as in Western cultures; instead, comfort and security tend to be more closely related to interpersonal relationships and attachment to the land, rather than objects. I propose therefore that the expression of object attachment may be heavily dependent upon the presence and strength of other attachment relationships. For archaeologists, this affects the ways in which we understand the links between emotion, social relationships, and material culture, which can be applied to future studies of material engagement.

Introduction

From everyday objects to significant personal possessions, humans have a unique relationship with the things around us. Our attachment to objects has been the subject of interest among developmental and social psychologists for many years (Bachar et al. 1998; Hong and Townes 1976; Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014; Norberg and Rucker 2021; Richins and Chaplin 2021; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988; Winnicott 1953). Yet, most of this research is conducted in Western, industrialised nations. If we look beyond these nations, it is clear that the emotional relationship between humans and material culture is more nuanced than first thought.

In this paper, I will discuss the experience of material engagement in two Alaska Native cultures, the Iñupiat and the Yup'ik. This paper focuses upon developing a broader conception of object attachment, particularly in non-industrialised nations. While the experiences and lifeways discussed here are culturally specific, a consideration of object attachment among these two nations can tell us a great deal about the factors impacting its expression in humans, and as such, can help to develop a less ethnocentric understanding of attachment theory and material culture studies.

Attachment theory, object attachment and archaeology

"I was given this dog when I was born and have had it ever since...I have taken him all around the world on trips, I have taken him to university, hospital, college, parties, funerals. I engage in repetitive stroking behaviour with him several times a day and find it very stressful if I misplace him. He is battered and torn, and I have fond memories of my Nan sewing him up and making him clothes when I was little to teaching me to patch him up and make clothes. I do use him as a significant comfort aid and he makes me feel better, however, he also reminds me of how far I've come and the life I've lead [sic]."

- Anonymous study participant

Objects such as Teddy, above, are often the recipients of a great deal of love and affection, and can confer deep feelings of comfort and security upon their owner. But why are humans so commonly attached to material culture?

According to the psychological theory of attachment, our attachments result from a biological 'attachment behavioural system', present not just in humans but in all mammals (Ainsworth 1969, 1993; Bowlby 1984). This attachment system leads us, from cradle to grave, to seek proximity to other people – 'attachment figures' – who provide us with a sense of security vital to our physical and emotional health and wellbeing. These attachment figures change throughout life. As an infant, our caregivers are likely to be our attachment figures, whereas friends or romantic partners may fulfil this role in adolescence and adulthood. In an ideal scenario, the security provided by our attachment figures imparts on us the confidence and security needed to confidently navigate the world and our relationships with other people. This confidence and security is known as a secure attachment style, and strongly influences our thoughts and behaviours.

Yet, interpersonal relationships are not infallible. Our loved ones may be unpredictable or unavailable, or we may simply be more naturally inclined towards feeling insecure. This leads to the development of an insecure attachment style. The human attachment system, however, is flexible, and we can form attachment relationships with a range of nonhuman beings, such as deities and pets (Bagley and Gonsman 2005; Beck and Madresh 2008; Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016; Zasloff and Kidd 1994; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer and Shaver 2012). Significantly for the study of material culture, our attachment system extends to inanimate objects.

While the emotional role of objects in childhood has long been recognised by developmental psychologists (Winnicott 1953; Hong and Townes 1976), it took far longer for other subdisciplines of psychology to consider the continuing role of objects in adulthood. We now understand that objects can be effective sources of comfort and security throughout life. Keefer and colleagues have made a significant contribution to this area, arguing that these 'attachment objects' are most often used at times of increased insecurity (Keefer et al. 2012; Keefer, Landau and Sullivan 2014). Object attachment is particularly common among individuals with the 'anxious' attachment style, and appears to be of most benefit to these anxiously attached individuals (Keefer and Rothschild 2020).

It is clear, therefore, that objects can and do have deep emotional impacts on the lives of many humans. Yet many anthropologists and archaeologists appear reticent to attribute anything more than surface-level emotional connection to the material culture of past

societies. Potentially emotionally significant objects are often subsumed into interpretations relating to symbolism, ritual, or identity. In a study of Awá material culture, González-Ruibal, Hernando and Politis (2011) focus on how arrows were linked to male identity and the creation and maintenance of the male self. It is clear, though not commented upon by the authors, that Awá men have a deep personal and emotional connection to the arrows that they make and use. They note that part of the significance of these arrows comes from their link “to the security of the pre-contact world” (González-Ruibal, Hernando and Politis 2011, 15), yet there is no mention of the deep emotional significance embodied in these objects, with the emotional connection between Awá men and their arrows being subsumed into the concept of identity.

Similarly, within psychological attachment literature, there has been little concerted effort to engage with cross-cultural (particularly non-white and non-Western) attachment research. What literature there is suggests significant cross-cultural differences in attachment style, particularly between societies with communal values and societies with more individualistic values, often linked to differing caregiving practices in infancy (Gaskins 2013; Quinn and Mageo 2013). While the 2010s saw an increase in cross-cultural attachment research (Quinn and Mageo 2013), by and large this still focused on industrialised cultures. A wider range of lifeways must be considered if we are to have a realistic view of attachment theory, and object attachment in turn.

Material engagement in two Alaska Native nations

With this in mind, this paper considers the experience of material engagement in two specific Alaska Native nations, the Iñupiat and the Yup'ik. Both are traditional hunter-gatherer groups living in the state of Alaska, with a history stretching back hundreds of years. In both of their languages, their name means ‘the real people’ (Harcharek and Craig 1995, 10; Krupnik and Chlenov 2013, xxix). Historically, neither group was uniform; both groups consisted of a large number of politically autonomous nations, each living within a certain geographical range (Burch Jr 1998, 3). The Iñupiat only really became one nation after 1900 (Burch Jr 1998, 8), while the picture is far more complicated for the Yup'ik. This paper will discuss only the St Lawrence Island and southwest Alaskan Yup'ik, but these groups share similarities with the Yup'ik in Siberia – indeed, the St Lawrence Island Yup'ik are often referred to as Siberian Yup'ik. The Eskimo-Aleut language family has two major branches: Yup'ik and Inuit, with the Yup'it

speaking the former and the Iñupiat speaking a dialect of the latter. This linguistic division between the two groups is also reflected in cultural and material differences (Fair 2006, 28; Fitzhugh 1988, 43).

Both groups live in challenging environmental contexts, though the people themselves do not see their environment as difficult. The Iñupiat in particular live in a variety of climates, but the northernmost climates pose particularly acute challenges for survival. While the Iñupiat live in the Arctic circle, the Yup'ik live further south in a less extreme climate. In both nations, there was traditionally a difference between summer and winter settlement, with the group breaking into smaller family groups in the summer and pitching camps further out in the land, while the group coalesced during the winter, when the weather was worst. The Yup'ik were slightly different, with larger social groupings and a semi-sedentary lifestyle (Fienup-Riordan 1990, 9; Fitzhugh 1988, 45).

Despite their differences, the two groups had similar core values: among the Iñupiat, respect, compassion, humility, sharing, avoidance of conflict, and cooperation (Harcharek and Beeman 2001, 66); among the Yup'ik, generosity, compassion, and avoidance of conflict and confrontation (Fienup-Riordan 2005).

Both groups have been heavily shaped by the effects of contact in the colonial period. The Iñupiat were among the first to meet with Western explorers and traders, while the Yup'ik experienced contact relatively late due to their comparative lack of resources (Burch Jr 2006, 1; Fair 2006, 50; Fienup-Riordan 2005, xxiii; Ongtooguk and Dybdahl 2010, 29). The effects of contact were striking: famine and epidemics led to huge proportions of the Yup'ik population dying in 1838-9, 1852-3, 1861 and 1878-80 (Fair 2006, 68; Fienup-Riordan 2005, xix; Koonooka 2010, 80; Krupnik and Chlenov 2013, 33). Yet until the early 1900s, their way of life was influenced more by other Alaska Natives than it was by Westerners (Fienup-Riordan 1983, 8), and the remoteness of St Lawrence Island in particular helped to sustain some traditions long beyond the contact period (Koonooka 2010, 91).

There are a great number of works covering Alaska Native life in detail (see, for example, Arctic Studies Center n.d.a; Ongtooguk and Dybdahl 2010; Roderick 2010; Worl 1988). Here, however, I will focus upon three key areas: their social relationships, their worldview, and their relationship with material culture. All three areas are tightly interconnected, and it is at times

difficult to separate them from one another, but they are perhaps the three most significant and most relevant themes to be discussed.

Social relationships

In much of the literature written about and by Alaska Native nations, social relationships are at the core of the discussion. This is unsurprising; the tightknit social relationships between Alaska Native people form a core part of who they are, how they think, and how they behave.

Speaking about social relationships on a wide scale is difficult; this section is a generalisation of many ways of life. There is a great deal of variability even among neighbouring groups (Krupnik and Chlenov 2013, 39). Yet, in general, the Iñupiat and Yup'ik ways of life might best be described as flexible egalitarianism, with a focus on facilitating peace and cooperation. Traditionally, the Iñupiat had a more flexible social system than the Yup'ik, whose social system was more lineage-based and gender differentiated, particularly on St Lawrence Island, where lineages were dominated by whaling captains (Crowell 1988, 195; Fair 2006, 71; Fitzhugh 1988, 45). Crowell (1988, 195) has linked this to the north-to-south trend of increasing house and household size, higher population density and expression of social complexity. Among the Iñupiat, who generally had smaller households and lived in smaller groups, a more egalitarian way of life prevailed.

Yet even in the more rigid Yup'ik system, cooperation and peacefulness were the ideal, and social relationships revolved around this core aim. Within groups, sharing was a vital part of subsistence (Beeman 2001, 4; Crowell 2010, 21). There was an interesting balance between individualism and communalism; while individuals had a great deal of personal autonomy, there was a widespread recognition that all were dependent on collaboration for survival (Burch Jr 2006, 125). While independence and self-reliance were encouraged from an early age (Fair 2006, 252), these nations were fundamentally relational (Fienup-Riordan 2005, 55). In general, men had greater authority than women (Burch Jr 2006, 65), yet both men and women recognised their fundamental interdependence (Fienup-Riordan 2005, 171). Kin-based relationships were particularly close, with blood ties and parental relationships having more importance than even marriage ties (Burch Jr 2006, 79–87; Crowell 2010, 23).

There is a common misconception that social relations in the Arctic were idyllic, and this was certainly not true; families and societies had their tensions just as any other does. Yet the way

the Iñupiat and Yup'ik viewed social relationships, and thus how these nations as a whole functioned, meant that there was a great deal of social flexibility. This allowed them to adapt to times of both prosperity and crisis (Burch Jr 2006, 125–126; Fienup-Riordan 1983, 142; Krupnik and Chlenov 2013, 148). Their fission-fusion style of social organisation allowed them to easily congregate in larger numbers or divide into smaller groups depending on the circumstances (Burch Jr 2006, 28). These close ingroup relations were not, however, always mirrored in outgroup relations, where relations varied from friendly to hostile. Yet many groups had alliances which helped them in times of scarcity (Burch Jr 2013, 219), further enabling their flexible style of social organisation.

Without a doubt, the most significant relationships in Alaska Native life were those between an individual and their parents. Children were incredibly highly valued; for couples, the birth of a child was the most important part of a marriage, and lack of children was grounds for divorce (Fienup-Riordan 1983, 163). When a child was born, they were not considered fully human until they had been given a name, usually that of a deceased relative (Fienup-Riordan 2005, 108). The namesake's soul was thought to be returned through the infant, who was expected to develop a personality and character resembling them (Burch Jr 2006, 58; Fair 2006, 30; Fienup-Riordan 1983, xviii). Thus, children weren't seen as 'new' people as such (Park 1998, 271), but rather a part of the cycle of the birth and rebirth of souls. This may have deepened their social attachment, with an acknowledgement of souls meeting one another again and again through time.

Within these nations, there was a great deal of flexibility in childcare practices. Adoption, for example, was widespread. People would sometimes give up a child for adoption to a childless couple (Fienup-Riordan 2005, 140). Adopted children were treated just like biological children, though the child maintained a relationship with their biological parents too (Fienup-Riordan 1983, 165). Whether biological or adopted, the parent-child relationship was one of real warmth and affection, particularly in infancy. There was almost constant physical contact between mothers and infants (Burch Jr 2006, 85; Park 1998, 271; Winkler Sprott 2002, 25); babies were generally carried in the back of their mother's parka, held up by a strap around the mother's waist, and were shifted around to the front for nursing without being exposed to the elements (Burch Jr 2006, 59). This high level of contact is common among many hunter-gatherer societies (Hewlett et al. 2000), and from an attachment perspective, provides

children with a consistent level of security. Extended families would also care for children, and it was a common custom for other adults to coo lovingly at children, a practice known as 'nuniaqing' (Sprott 1999; Winkler Sprott 2002, 71). Iñupiat children in particular were given much attention. All children were hugely loved and lived in a supportive, nurturing environment, full of close family relationships (Burch Jr 2006, 59). Yup'ik children were not indulged in quite the same way that other Arctic groups did (Fienup-Riordan 2005, 129). Yet, it was believed that children developed awareness gradually, and as a result, people were careful not to give babies negative perceptions of life, as it was believed that this would shape the rest of their lives (Rearden 2010, 105).

Once children became a little older, they had almost complete freedom until the age of about twelve, at which time they began to help their parents (Park 1998, 272–273). During the teenage years, the parent-child relationship became characterised by greater formality, respectfulness, and emotional restraint (Burch Jr 2006, 86; Winkler Sprott 2002, 186), a pattern which continued throughout life. Yet, though these relationships became less outwardly affectionate, they were no less meaningful or significant.

From an attachment perspective, the close-knit family relationships outlined here would – at least in their idealised form – provide a strong sense of security. Alaska Native social relationships, particularly those between kin, are extremely close-knit, and there is a widespread understanding of the interdependence of all people. These close relationships provide incredible security throughout life, and no other relationship takes precedence over kin relationships. The social flexibility of many Alaska Native cultures often allows those who are more vulnerable to receive care and attention (e.g., adoption, the respect and care shown to elders) to allow them to thrive socially. While disputes do break out, and family life has its tensions, Alaska Native cultures are structured in such a way that every individual is (ideally) secure in the knowledge that they are surrounded by loved ones, and that those loved ones will be available when needed. These types of relationship are common in many other hunter-gatherer societies (Hewlett et al. 2000), which place great emphasis on promoting a sense of closeness and security, particularly through sharing, mutual trust, and reciprocity (Bird-David 1990; Lavi and Friesem 2019).

Worldview

Beyond interpersonal relationships, it is also interesting to consider how Alaska Natives conceived of the world as a whole. The traditional Alaska Native worldview is animistic. Animism encompasses the view that a spirit resides in every being and thing, and that these spirits control all aspects of the world (Auger 2005, 40; Fair 2006, 30; Ray 1967, 9). Humans and animals were thought to share the same life force, called '*inua*' by the Iñupiat and '*yua*' by the Yup'ik (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 374). As a result, Alaska Natives had an abiding respect for the flora, fauna and land, and a belief that animals understood human intentions (Crowell 2010, 13; Fair 2006, 8; Fienup-Riordan 1988, 258). This is in sharp contrast to the human-nonhuman divide that typically characterises Western, dualistic worldviews (Qu 2017, 57). Alaska Native nations hold that death is not the end, and that all souls are in a continual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (Fienup-Riordan 1983, xix).

This, naturally, affects all aspects of their lives. This respect for the natural world is particularly noticeable in the way that they treat animals. Given that they share the same life force, humans and animals have a collaborative, respectful relationship (Fair 2006, 8; Fienup-Riordan 1988, 258; Roderick 2010, 78), and the way that an individual treated animals and the land around them would affect their physical and spiritual wellbeing (Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1983, 8).

Shamanism was traditionally a significant part of the Alaska Native worldview. Shamanism as a concept is broad, but generally involves a belief system centred around a spirit world, with practitioners known as shamans acting as a mediator between the living and spirit worlds. Shamanic practices were, until relatively recently, widespread in Arctic cultures, and shamans traditionally played a significant role in the people's link with the land and spirits (Arctic Studies Center 2019; Auger 2005, 9; Laugrand and Oosten 2010, xvii; Oosten 2004, 307). Shamans were an intermediary between the physical and supernatural worlds (Qu 2017, 58), and were meant to encourage spirits' goodwill and good deeds, as well as healing and foretelling the future (Auger 2005, 40; Crowell 2010, 24; Ray 1967, 7).

To summarise, their worldview is a holistic one, viewing everything as interconnected. A significant consequence of this worldview is a strong attachment not just to animals, but also to the land. Place continues to play a key role in their lives, shaping their identity as a people

(Fair 2006, xxv; Harcharek and Beeman 2001, 66). The respectful way in which they treat the land and hunt is not simply about subsisting; their relationship with the land and the other beings and spirits within it, is at the very core of their lives (Crowell 2010, 21).

For those unfamiliar with the Alaskan environment, it may seem harsh and unforgiving, but Alaska Natives have a completely different conception of the land. To them, it is a place of relative comfort and security (Fair 2006, 209, 213; Fienup-Riordan 1983, 345). The insecurities and difficulties of the environment were traditionally controlled through highly structured culturally mandated rituals and taboos (Burch Jr 2006, 294; Fienup-Riordan 1983, xix) or, in particularly harsh periods, by spreading across the land to increase chances of survival (Burch Jr 2006, 89). Alaska Natives lived their lives in the belief that the land could and would provide all they could ever need as long as it was treated with respect and care (Fienup-Riordan 1983, xx; Roderick 2010, 33).

From an attachment perspective, it is clear that for Alaska Natives, the land acts as another attachment figure. The most significant attachment relationship Alaska Native groups seem to have, besides those with other people, is their attachment to the land and everything within it, both flora and fauna. They have a relationship of intense respect with their environment, and this is reflected in their entire way of life: their subsistence practices, their ceremonies and rituals, and the way they bring up their children. They are dependent upon the land for their way of life, but this does not intimidate them; indeed, they view the land as a source of comfort and security. This mirrors a common belief among hunter-gatherer groups: Bird-David refers to this as the 'giving environment', or the belief that the environment is a benevolent or giving entity from which its occupants derive deep feelings of comfort and security (Bird-David 1990; Hewlett et al. 2000). It is common among hunter-gatherer groups to view humans as being part of a wider ecosystem involving the land, animals and spirits, and thus the land is a being which provides a great deal of comfort.

Relationship with material culture

Alaska Native social relationships were extremely close-knit, providing a near-constant sense of security, with the knowledge that their relationships were lifelong. Like other hunter-gatherer communities, their belief system and relationship with the land was, too, a source of comfort and security, and the land arguably acted as a significant attachment relationship

itself. From the perspective of attachment theory, then, it might be expected that Alaska Natives had no need for any emotional attachment to material culture, given the variety of strong attachment relationships available elsewhere. Yet this oversimplifies their relationship with material culture.

In this paper, I will focus specifically on carved human and animal representations. These are often called 'dolls' in the literature, a somewhat confusing term as it suggests playthings, but I will use the terms 'doll' and 'figurine' interchangeably here. In reality, these representations have a variety of purposes and meanings, such as play, education, protection, ritual use, or sale (Lee 2006; Linn 2006; Linn and Lee 2006). This is part of the reason that I have chosen to discuss them here. Animal and human representations have been created by Alaska Natives since prehistory (Fair 1982, 46, 2006, 59; Issenman 1989, 377) and form an important part of Alaska Native material culture and lifeways (Arctic Studies Center 2013; Fair 2006, 61; McDonagh 2014). This paper is based both on primary research undertaken at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (NMAI), as well as a review of the available literature regarding Alaska Native dolls. For drawings of each figure, see Appendix 2.

Archaeological figurines and carvings are often referred to as 'art', but Alaska Natives did not historically have the same distinction between art and other material culture as in Western societies. Everyday objects were commonly decorated to enhance their effectiveness: for example, the tools you used to fish or hunt would be decorated as it was believed that this would be pleasing to the soul of the animal you were trying to catch, so they would be more likely to give up their life to you (Fair 2006, 53; Fitzhugh 1984, 27; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1983, 8).

The Iñupiat often called human figurines *inuguat*, meaning 'pretend people' or 'that which resembles a person' (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 368; Sheldon Jackson Museum 2011). Across Alaska, figurines of both animals and humans appeared in a range of sizes and a variety of forms, some naturalistic, some stylised, others abstract (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 367). Yup'ik dolls had a more pronounced brow line and crescent-shaped mouths, whereas Iñupiaq figurines had more pronounced noses, tiny eyes and straight mouths, a style that Linn and Lee (2006, 10) describe as "more crudely carved". St Lawrence Island dolls were

a little different, being much simpler wood carvings with no clothing or facial details (Linn and Lee 2006, 11).

Preferred materials for carving were ivory and wood, but bone was also used (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 370; Linn and Lee 2006, 10). Some dolls were constructed with stuffed animal skins (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 372), though this appears to have been a trend started relatively late on in the 1890s (Linn and Lee 2006, 10). Driftwood would be used for wooden carvings, while walrus were the most common source of ivory. Ivory cannot be carved immediately once procured; it first has to be prepared, or 'seasoned', by being wrapped in a blanket and put away for at least three months (Fair 2006, 34). If ivory is too dry or too damp, it cracks as soon as you begin to carve it (Arctic Studies Center 2018a). Ivory was particularly valued as a carving material as its chemical and biological composition makes it hard and durable, yet also plastic; as a result, it has been used in this region for over 2000 years (Fair 2006, 34). The material used for carving, though, generally depended on what was available; there was less ivory carving in areas where walrus were less abundant or where subsistence practices revolved around whales (Fair 2006, 37–38).

Traditionally, ivory carving was undertaken by men (Silook 2001, 59) in the men's house. They sat together on the floor and carved using bow drills and files (Arctic Studies Center 2018b, 2019). Yup'ik carvings have more surface designs than those further north, being generally less representational and more embellished (Fair 2006, 41). Yup'ik ivory was often decorated with red ochre imbued with symbolic and magical properties. Painting on ivory is rarer among the Iñupiat, though they do occasionally use black India ink (Fair 2006, 43).

These dolls had a myriad of forms and purposes, and it can be difficult to discern each doll's meaning (Auger 2005, 55; Linn and Lee 2006, 10), because figurines which look almost identical may have completely different functions.

Figurines for children's play and education

The use of dolls for play was generally, though not always, restricted to girls (Park 1998, 274). Young girls played with dolls made from ivory, bone and wood, usually carved by their fathers (Arctic Studies Center n.d.b). Dolls often lacked limbs to allow them to be clothed, and clothing was usually made by the girl's mother, or by the girl herself (Linn and Lee 2006, 11). Helping to make the clothing taught girls important skills that they would need in adulthood

(Issenman 1989, 377; Strickler and Alookkee 1988, 12), and the clothing and decoration that dolls wore was an accurate depiction of how people dressed. As a result, it is often easy to tell the gender of a doll based on certain features, such as the anatomy, facial decoration (e.g., presence of labrets or facial tattoos) and the shape and style of clothing (Arctic Studies Center 2013).

Play dolls allowed children to become accustomed to adult activities, ceremonies, beliefs and behaviours (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 368), as well as simply being fun to play with (Fair 1982, 54). Girls had multiple dolls in different sizes, made from different materials, and would make the dolls act and talk like a person (Arctic Studies Center n.d.c; Strickler and Alookkee 1988, 12). Some girls had families of dolls, mirroring in some cases their own family (Sheldon Jackson Museum 2011). Nelson noted, upon visiting Sledge Island, that:

"...two little girls in the house where we stopped amused us by watching their opportunity...to place their dolls standing in a semicircle before us upon the floor, while they sat quietly behind as though permitting their dolls to take a look at the strangers..." (Nelson 1900, 345).

The dolls were stored away inside a bag or bundled up when not used, and smaller dolls were generally only played with inside, as they were easily lost if used outdoors (Arctic Studies Center n.d.d; Fair 1982, 55). Girls treated their dolls with care, as if they were living things, and some even had multiple changes of clothes (Fair 1982, 55; Linn and Lee 2006, 11). Among some groups, there were seasonal prohibitions on when dolls could be used (Linn and Lee 2006, 11), but Alaska Native elders note that this was not universal (Arctic Studies Center 2013).

As to whether there was attachment to these objects, it is difficult to say for certain. Interestingly, Alaska Native children are not weaned until the ages of four or five (Burch Jr 2006, 59), past the traditional age for uptake of 'transitional objects' used in Western culture to help with the difficult weaning period. This might suggest that the use of attachment objects that we see in Western cultures may have been less common; as noted earlier, infancy was marked instead by an incredible closeness to parents and caregivers. While independence is encouraged, children are surrounded by others at all times, meaning there is always an attachment figure close at hand and arguably negating the need for an attachment object. Similarly, while girls had dolls, there were seasonal restrictions on playing

with them and Yup'ik girls were also expected to give their dolls away during puberty (Fair 2006, 63; Fienup-Riordan 1988, 263; Linn and Lee 2006, 11; Morrow 2002, 339; Oswalt 1990, 33; Rearden 2010, 114), which may have lessened the attachment to them, particularly among the Yup'ik. These early experiences would likely have had a lifelong impact on their relationship with material culture. From an attachment perspective, all of the behaviours related to play toys may suggest a lack of attachment to material culture, and the perception that it was not a good idea to attach oneself to childish possessions once you had outgrown them.

Yet there was not a total detachment from material culture. Young girls, for example, might carry large numbers of dolls with them, and these dolls did seem to offer emotional protection. If we think back to Nelson's encounter with the two young girls, the physical presence of these dolls may have reduced their anxiety during this encounter (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 373), which could in turn demonstrate the use of these dolls as attachment objects. Dolls were extremely common as objects for both play and education, and there are anecdotal cases of individuals holding onto their dolls well after childhood, albeit in secret. Given the length and intensity of the relationship that children often had with their dolls, this is not altogether surprising. It may be that dolls and play toys offered children one source of attachment security as part of a large and flexible body of attachment figures, including spiritual beings, landscapes, and the adults around them.

Figurines for protection and ritual use

Children were not the only members of societies who had long-lasting relationships with material culture, however. All members of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik owned charms and amulets for both personal protection and hunting magic (Fair 1982, 50). The terms 'charm' and 'amulet' are two different things, though are often used interchangeably. To be specific, a charm is something which brings good fortune to its owner, while amulets are used for protection. Among Alaska Natives, there were two main types of charms and amulets: hunting charms, thought to bring good fortune to hunters, and amulets, which provided personal protection against malevolent influences.

Charms and amulets came in many forms, but particularly common were small animal and human figurines (Ainana, Achirgina-Arsiak and Tein 1996; Fitzhugh 1984, 28; Qu 2017, 55), and these will form the focus of this section. These charms had various powers and were worn

around their necks, on their belts, in their clothing, and fastened to hunting equipment and boats (Arctic Studies Center n.d.e; Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1983, 9). Among the Iñupiat, carvings of bowhead whales were used in a thanksgiving ceremony after the whaling season, hung over the lamp in the captain's house in a ceremony re-enacting the hunt (Arctic Studies Center n.d.f), while St Lawrence Island whaling captains fed wooden dolls during certain ceremonies before burning them (Auger 2005, 56; Fair 1982, 51). Some hunting captains still carry charms today (Arctic Studies Center n.d.g; Crowell 2010, 22; Hugo 2010, 50).

Besides hunting charms, personal amulets were also worn by almost everyone, and were kept on one's person at all times to ensure one's safety. Personal amulets were imbued with magical power, used to ward off danger or to bring good luck (Burch Jr 2006, 260). The older an amulet, the more powerful it became, though the magical power of each amulet was for a specific purpose, so most people owned many (Burch Jr 2006, 260, 2013, 30). They were worn in a variety of ways, whether hung on the back, inside the clothing or by their feet, suspended from the ceiling of a house, or attached to boats (Burch Jr 2006, 260; Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 373; Prins and McBride 2012, 361). Many had holes drilled into them to allow them to be attached to something else. Some of these charms were related to fertility (Fair 2006, 61). Fitzhugh and Engelstad (2017, 381) relate that female figurines were sometimes worn as pendants with the figure hung upside-down, which they suspected may be related to the process of birth. Some figurines were sewn onto the backs of young girls' parkas, similarly placed to how a mother would carry an infant (Fair 2006, 61). On St Lawrence Island, wooden figures were also used as household guardians (*alingtiiritaq*) which were placed at the entrance of a house and fed or rubbed with blubber (Arctic Studies Center n.d.h). Some charms and amulets were thought to lose their power after a while, and ineffective charms might be discarded (Burch Jr 2013).

Children were seen as vulnerable to malevolent influences, so were provided with and wore many amulets from birth (Auger 2005, 54; Park 1998, 273). These were placed for safe-keeping in a specially made sealskin sack along with other amulets (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 373). Amulets were unusual in that they were one of the objects that were regarded as truly individual (i.e., you could not borrow someone else's) but household charms would be passed from generation to generation. Some of the charm figurines might be clothed, and it was thought that the spirit protection was held in the design of the clothing. As a result, "figurines

recovered from ancient contexts may be bare remnants of their former selves" (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 368).

Dolls also occasionally had shamanic purposes. The literature does not say a great deal about shamanic dolls, perhaps because their use was not understood by those who wrote about these cultures, or because these practices were kept private from non-shamans. In some areas, only shamans had dolls (Fair 1982, 46; Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 375), which could be clothed and ornamented (Dockstader 1961).

Charms and amulets appear to be closer to what we could conceive of as attachment objects than other types of Alaska Native material culture. These objects, which were ubiquitous among these cultures, provided a palpable sense of comfort and security, and in the case of amulets were extremely personal items which would not be given away, and might even be buried with their owner. This individual significance can make it difficult for us to truly understand their significance; from both a physical and emotional standpoint, as Fitzhugh and Engelstad (2017, 368) have noted, we may be studying only "bare remnants" of the original figurines.

It is worth mentioning here that, as mentioned above, some of these objects were thrown away when they were perceived as no longer useful. However, from an attachment perspective, this does not mean that they were not figures of attachment for some time. An individual's attachment figure, human, object, or otherwise, may not be lifelong, and attachment figures change over the course of one's life.

Figurines for sale

While Alaska Native figurines explicitly made to be sold can today be found in museums all over the world, they only began being produced for sale in post-contact, colonial contexts. Alaska Native people have been making dolls for sale since the late 19th century (Fair 1982, 55), when Western explorers and traders were willing to pay or trade for 'genuine' carvings. Production of art became, in time, a substitute for hunting in terms of prestige (Auger 2005, 104), as well as a means of making money (Duncan 2000, 44).

By the mid-19th century, both the Yup'ik and the Iñupiat were both making items and giving their 'good for nothing things' to explorers (Duncan 2000, 43). While Alaska Native artists themselves prefer shiny, highly polished artefacts, the models for sale were often more

crudely carved and left unpolished (Auger 2005, 101–103). Alaska Native artists learnt quickly what types of carvings would and would not sell, so the form of carvings for sale increasingly reflected Western tastes and Western conceptions of what was ‘genuine’ rather than actual, genuine styles and subjects. Some scholars have decried the rise of this ‘market art’ (Ray 1981), but we can also see this as a further evolution of their material culture.

These objects were not the focus of attachment, in part because they would be sold and taken away, but also likely because the stylistic changes imposed on them by colonial traders and explorers meant that these items were produced to reflect colonial views of Alaska Natives and as an economic necessity (Auger 2005, 159; Fair 2006, 35), rather than carrying any significant meaning for the makers themselves.

Implications for archaeological approaches to significant objects

From an archaeological perspective, studying ethnographic evidence of material culture is invaluable in two ways: practical and theoretical. From a practical perspective, it can tell us about the physical aspects of objects, such as design and wear patterns. In the archaeological record, particularly in prehistory, we lack a great deal of evidence due to issues of taphonomy and preservation, and what evidence we have may be only a small part of what was originally present. The ethnographic data here is of great use in demonstrating how much we may be missing when we consider archaeological objects. If the dolls studied in this paper were buried for thousands of years, they would be gone entirely, or highly fragmentary at best.

Also useful for archaeologists is the acknowledgement of the variety of functions and forms that one type of objects may have. As part of my doctoral research, I briefly spent time with the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian looking at Iñupiat, Yup’ik and Thule figurines, and it was interesting how many figurines which looked extremely similar had completely different purposes and meanings. What was interesting, however, was the difficulty of discerning function from form. Even with the benefit of the ethnographic literature and the recollections of elders, there is a great deal we still do not know, or which has only been speculated at. Some of the rules of thumb I had read about for identifying the purpose of an object did not seem to hold up in practice (such as the assertion that dolls with blue beads were shamanic dolls, which did not appear to be supported by the NMAI’s

collections). Similarly, some of the literature suggests that clothed dolls are more likely to be toys, but I found evidence of a number of dolls which were either clothed or had attachments for clothing, which were actually shamanic dolls.

It was possible, however, to discern some trends. Clothed dolls were most often children's dolls, while figurines shaped like animals were most often hunting or fishing charms and amulets. Size appeared to have no relation to use. With regards to the material used, wood and ivory appear to have been the preferred materials (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 370), but transcripts of interviews with Alaska Native elders ((Arctic Studies Center n.d.b)), combined with what is known about the lifeways of these groups, suggest that people simply used what was around them to carve dolls and figurines. In the context of the archaeological record, this reminds us that groups of objects which are all interpreted in the same way, such as prehistoric figurines, may in fact represent a variety of meanings and purposes.

At the beginning of this project, I also considered wear patterns, to try and determine whether particular figurines had specific patterns of wear. Might there be, for example, different patterns of polish on a child's toy compared to an amulet? Overall, it was difficult to discern particular polish patterns. Most of the figurines had more wear on the head and torso, and a number of the figures had polish even over scratches and damage, but often the places that were most polished were those which stuck out the most and so would be expected to accumulate more polish. Other researchers have noted the lack of workmanship or evidence of curation on wooden dolls in particular, as the majority were worn under clothing (Fitzhugh and Engelstad 2017, 370), making it difficult to discern particular patterns of polish. In the dolls I looked at, the wooden dolls were particularly simple in their design, compared to their ivory counterparts, precisely because they would originally have been clothed. Many of the dolls, particularly the ivory dolls, had easily discernible areas of polish, but identifying wider patterns was more difficult. Trying to find physical traces of a specific kind of touch is difficult, especially when there is not a great deal of information about the way these objects were held in the first place. There is some information regarding how objects were hung or attached to clothing, housing or even boats, but this was not apparent in any distinctive patterns of polish on the objects themselves. That said, I think this may be a productive angle for future study, but it requires far more time and expertise, and more technical equipment, than was possible in the timeframe. As it stands, studying the patterns of polish was not as

useful as anticipated. Again, this demonstrates another difficulty from an archaeological perspective, as objects with different purposes may appear, from patterns of polish, to have been used in similar ways.

From a theoretical perspective, the study of ethnographic material culture provides us with a deeper understanding of the emotional, as well as the symbolic, significance of material culture. In this specific context, we have found that the expression of object attachment is highly culturally specific and appears heavily dependent upon the presence and strength of other attachment relationships. Psychological research into object attachment has found objects are more often used in individualistic cultures and among anxious individuals; the experience of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik peoples offers a cross-cultural corroboration of these findings. Their attachment to their loved ones and to the land altogether provide a strong sense of comfort and security, but their social system is also flexible enough to cope with change and uncertainty (the latter being aided by the use of material culture, in the form of charms and amulets). Their lifestyle prizes close, peaceful connections to loved ones and the land above all else, and as such, these nations are generally close-knit and secure in their knowledge that they are loved and cared for by others, even in the face of challenges presented by the world around them.

Prehistoric archaeologists interested in the meaning of material culture tend to focus heavily on symbolism to the exclusion of emotion. Yet considering the material culture and lifeways of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik demonstrates how the two can be interlinked. The type of material culture closest to what we might consider an attachment object comes in the form of charms and amulets, which provide feelings of security and allow individuals, families, and entire groups to cope with instability and insecurity.

Implications for attachment theory

This study also has implications for our understanding of attachment theory. The expression of object attachment is clearly dependent on the presence of other attachment relationships; in the case of Alaska Natives, their most significant attachment relationships include both close interpersonal relationships and relationships with the world around them. Much of the prevailing literature into attachment is largely ignorant of non-Western patterns of attachment, and in particular the role of the landscape as an attachment figure. More study

is needed into the prevalence of different attachment styles among animistic cultures and attachment to the landscape, and future studies into object attachment should consider in more detail the role of religious or spiritual material culture.

Conclusion

Over the last few years, archaeology has taken a 'material turn'. As part of this, the symbolic significance of objects has been a major focus of archaeological research. Nonetheless, archaeology still lags behind other disciplines in its conception of emotion, and in particular the ways in which the social, emotional, and material are intertwined.

Attachment theory underlines how important it is for archaeologists to consider socio-emotional experiences. However, archaeological conceptions of the mind often risk being heavily biased by their overreliance on psychological data. By considering alternative, ethnographic contexts, we gain a more accurate view of how the mind functions in a wider range of cultures. This elucidates which behaviours are universal to all humans, and those which are shaped by one's lived experiences, including their upbringing and cultural background. Teasing out this distinction between universal and contextual behaviours is vital if we are to better understand how object attachment may or may not have functioned in archaeological contexts. In the context of two specific Alaska Native nations, one major factor influences the expression of object attachment: the existence of other close attachment relationships, whether with other people or with the land itself.

But how might archaeologists do things differently? How does this influence our interpretations of human behaviour and material culture in the archaeological record? To my mind, there are a myriad of opportunities. To give just one example, grave goods found with children might be seen in an entirely different light. Often, objects buried with children are discussed only briefly, for example, as personal ornaments (d'Errico and Backwell 2016), but this ignores the potential socio-emotional role of grave goods, and the feelings of those leaving grave goods in a child's grave.

Similarly, this paper has noted the significant role of charms and amulets in providing feelings of comfort and security. From an archaeological perspective, objects which are interpreted as religious are often viewed simply as proof of widespread belief systems, with no regard for the feelings and emotions that these objects might have evoked when worn or used.

Archaeologists talk a great deal about symbolism, religious or otherwise, but rarely do they consider the socio-emotional role of symbolic material culture. Symbols are not used in a social and emotional vacuum, and attachment theory provides one explanation for the potential socio-emotional power of these objects.

Thus, this research demonstrates how it is possible for archaeologists and anthropologists to engage with the often intangible topic of emotion using the tangible evidence provided by material culture. Humans are not emotionless automatons. By deepening our understanding of a greater range of experiences such as object attachment, it becomes possible to forge a diverse and realistic conception of how humans' socio-emotional lives are reflected in and shaped by material culture.

Chapter 8

Discussion: Reconsidering Object Attachment

Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated that we have a basic understanding of object attachment, but also that there were remaining questions surrounding how it varies, how it differs from other forms of material engagement, and how it affects the objects themselves. The insights from the psychological and ethnoarchaeological evidence in the previous chapters have proven useful, elucidating some of these questions and providing a better understanding of object attachment.

This chapter will thus develop the initial understanding of object attachment outlined earlier in this thesis, considering whether the findings from the previous chapters provide answers to the questions which remained after Chapter 3. There are two major areas to be covered in this chapter: the factors influencing the expression of object attachment, and the objects themselves. I will begin by considering the specific factors, both dispositional and situational, which promote socio-emotional attachments to objects. I will demonstrate that object attachment is more ubiquitous in certain contexts than is often assumed, though it is particularly common in individuals whose attachment style is highly anxious, or who find themselves in insecure scenarios. I will then consider how attachment relationships are made

material, focusing on common characteristics of object attachment such as their form, meaning, how people engage with these objects, and the effects that this has on these objects in turn. It is clear that attachment objects commonly share several characteristics, namely their portability, unique form and value, as well as a deep social, mnemonic, and emotional connection to their users. Yet even within these commonalities, there is incredible variety.

The chapter will then move on to consider the topic of variation more broadly, focusing on how attachment objects may be used in different ways, by different people, in different contexts. I will need to consider both short- and long-term attachments, and the ways in which object attachment can go wrong and why this might be. This will allow me to consider how attachment may perform different functions according to context and individual need (such as on a short-term or temporary basis, compared to objects as a long-term or permanent attachment relationship).

All of the above allows me to develop some expectations for the archaeological record. I will consider how archaeological material culture might change as the result of an increased attachment to objects, both on an individual basis and more widely across cultures, before moving on to consider the broader impact of object attachment on people in archaeological populations. The aim of this thesis is not to identify specific attachment objects in the archaeological record. Instead, I will consider a question that is arguably more interesting: how might material culture reflect an increased need for compensatory attachment figures in archaeological populations?

Altogether, this chapter represents a departure from previous conceptions of material culture in the psychological, anthropological, and archaeological literature. It demonstrates that objects are not simply a passive reflection of our feelings or a representation of our social relationships. Instead, they play an active role in shaping our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, with long-lasting effects on our socio-emotional cognition. They do not just affect people individually, but strengthen our social bonds by cementing interpersonal relationships, even when the people involved are physically separate. This is integral for both individual wellbeing and the survival of entire groups, as well as the networks of which they are a part. It demonstrates not just the intersection of social, emotional, and material aspects of human life, but also how tightly these factors are interconnected and the ways in which they are reliant on one another.

This chapter gives us a starting point with which to consider the socio-emotional side of human culture and cognition in the deep past, with which we can think about our emotional and material coping mechanisms for dealing with insecurity, stress, and change. It demonstrates how humans have used, and continue to use, material culture to bolster their socio-emotional security and resilience throughout life.

Recap: Remaining questions

Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated that we have a basic understanding of object attachment in humans. We know that the human attachment system is uniquely plastic in comparison to that of other mammals and that, because of this, humans have the ability to become attached to a wider variety of beings, both human and nonhuman. This ability is common to all humans but is only expressed under specific conditions or circumstances, particularly those involving stress or insecurity. Anxiously attached individuals appear far more likely to use attachment objects on a regular basis and may find these nonhuman attachments particularly satisfying. Securely attached individuals may use these objects more selectively – for example, at times of acute stress or insecurity – while avoidant individuals are least likely to use these objects at all.

We understand, then, that certain people are more likely to become attached to objects than others. However, as noted in Chapters 2 and 3, research into object attachment across all disciplines is in its infancy, so a number of questions remain. Three areas in particular are of relevance to this project, which I will outline briefly here.

Variation in object attachment

Most important of all is the question of variation in object attachment. Chapter 2 outlined one major factor in the variation of object attachment: attachment anxiety. However, this led to the question of whether there are other factors which have a major impact upon the expression of object attachment. We know that people who are more anxiously attached are also more likely to report an attachment object, and we also know that there are cross-cultural differences in the prevalence of object attachment. What about, however, the impact of demographic factors, such as age or gender? Similarly, do other attachment relationships such as pets or religious beliefs influence the prevalence of object attachment, too?

How object attachment is unique

If we are to best understand what object attachment is, we also need to understand what it is not. From Chapters 2 and 3 we have a basic understanding of what object attachment is – an individual's emotional attachment to an object in order to bolster their feelings of security, which appears to gain significance because of the object's social, mnemonic and emotional agency. However, how does this differ from other forms of material engagement, such as heirlooms and gift-giving? There are many forms of both social and emotional material culture, but an important question remains regarding how object attachment differs.

Common characteristics of attachment objects

One of the clearest gaps in the existing literature is an understanding of the objects themselves. Neither psychology, anthropology nor archaeology were able to tell us a great deal about whether attachment objects share any common characteristics, or indeed whether there are certain key, core characteristics that appear to be important in encouraging attachment. As has been stated multiple times, such an understanding is key to any archaeological understanding of object attachment, as it is these common characteristics which are most likely to become visible in the archaeological record and thus within the reach of archaeological analysis.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will revisit these questions using insights from my psychological and ethnoarchaeological research to gain a more in-depth understanding of object attachment.

Contextual factors promoting object attachment

Insecurity, particularly personal insecurity in the form of anxious attachment, plays a significant role in the prevalence of object attachment. Yet the findings from both the psychological and ethnoarchaeological research demonstrate that it is not simply personal insecurity, but any kind of uncertainty, which increases object attachment. This uncertainty can take a range of forms. However, I believe these can be broadly separated into two categories: dispositional and situational factors.

Dispositional factors

Dispositional factors are those unique to the individual. As such, they may be related to individual personality or cognition (including attachment style). The psychological studies outlined in Chapter 5 reaffirm the link between object attachment and anxious attachment. In the two psychological surveys I carried out, anxious attachment was by far the clearest factor in the expression of object attachment, more closely linked to object attachment than any other factor in any of the studies. Avoidant attachment, however, had no discernible link with object attachment. There is a wealth of literature attesting to the link between anxious attachment and object attachment (Keefer and Rothschild 2020; Konok et al. 2016; Neave et al. 2016; Norberg et al. 2018), and in this sense, this research has affirmed this link.

No other individual factor was so clearly linked to the expression of object attachment. It was expected that age and gender might be predictive or causal factors, but my findings here were not conclusive one way or the other. This is interesting; with respect to age, as noted briefly in Chapter 5, the wider literature includes contradictory findings on the relationship between age and object attachment. Some have noted an increased attachment to objects as age increases (Comstock 1981) and yet others have concluded that there is in fact a decrease (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). This issue is made more difficult by the fact that, as Dozier and Ayers (2021, 107) have noted, most of the literature related to old age revolves around pathological conditions. There was, in my own findings, the suggestion of a decrease in object attachment for older participants, mirroring Wallendorf and Arnould's findings, but given the overwhelmingly younger age of participants, this is by no means conclusive. This trend could be linked instead to the apparent decrease in attachment anxiety in older participants. Thus, rather than proving a link between age and object attachment, this result may simply reaffirm object attachment's strong link with attachment anxiety.

Similarly, gender was not as significant a factor as had been expected. It was predicted that women would be more attached to objects, and while women were more likely to report an attachment to objects in all of the studies carried out – a finding that was statistically significant – the effect size was small. Furthermore, as with age, most participants in all three studies were female (a common limitation of psychological studies) which may have influenced the results, as did the finding that women were, on average, more anxiously

attached than men. Yet again, differences in attachment style may account for gendered differences in object attachment.

Thus, attachment anxiety appears to have a powerful effect on the expression of object attachment, with anxiously attached individuals far more likely to become attached to objects. For these people, inert, controllable objects may provide a consistent, long-lasting level of support not necessarily available in their interpersonal relationships, which may lack the consistent security the anxious individual seeks. While interpersonal relationships may on occasion be unavailable, unhelpful, or unreliable, material culture is a far steadier, and altogether more controllable, source of security.

Situational factors

In contrast to individual dispositional factors, situational factors are those related more to external circumstances such as culture, upbringing, and the existence of other attachment relationships, as well as more short-term changes in a person's situation. I have categorised other attachment relationships as situational factors, rather than dispositional factors, as these are more external than internal, but this does demonstrate the complex and intertwined nature of the many factors affecting attachment style and object attachment.

The ethnographic research found that the existence of strong attachment relationships, in the form of both relationships with other people and with the wider landscape (and the spirits within all beings) appeared to inhibit the widespread use of individualistic attachment objects among the Iñupiat and Yup'ik. Yet the plethora of charms and amulets used could be argued to function as attachment objects, providing the people within these nations with powerful feelings of security. These objects formed a vital part of their ability to thrive emotionally within an often hostile environment, acting as symbols and reminders of their environment and of the spirits around them, in particular the spirits of the animals on whom they relied for subsistence. Their strong attachment to the land and the beings around them was made material in these objects, as opposed to the psychological research which found that the attachment relationships imbued in objects were generally more individual, personal attachment relationships. Thus, cultural background impacts both the use, form and meaning of attachment objects, demonstrating the interplay between cultural, emotional, and material elements.

However, within cultures there is a great deal of complexity and variability. Within a culture there are likely to be particular sections of society which suffer more stress or instability (such as, in hunter-gatherer groups, groups of individuals who go out to hunt or gather food in smaller groups), for whom an insecure attachment style may be adaptive. If we also think back to the notion of differential susceptibility, we know that attachment style can vary widely within cultures, and in some cases the variability within cultures is greater than that between cultures. Thus, it is important for us to remember that attachment will vary within the same culture as well as between different cultures.

The psychological research also considered the role of other attachment relationships, focusing upon religious belief, pets, and relationship status. I had predicted that individuals with religious beliefs, pets, or who lived alone were more likely to be attached to objects. The interplay of many of these factors as well as attachment style itself means that it is currently difficult to say with full certainty that these factors impact the use of attachment objects, but there was some suggestion that pet owners, religious individuals and individuals who were single or in a relationship were more likely to report an attachment to an object.

The wider literature is at present vague about the interplay between different attachment relationships, and the role of some attachment relationships in mediating others. Yet cross-cultural studies demonstrate that the culture or cultures in which we grow up, as well as our upbringing, can have a widespread impact on our attachment style and attachment relationships (Hong and Townes 1976). Children from cultures with communal values are far less likely to use an attachment object than children from cultures with more individualistic values. The close-knit nature of Iñupiat and Yup'ik social life and the interdependence of all the individuals within both nations ensured that individuals were always surrounded by loved ones, providing incredible security, and arguably negating the need for attachment objects, at least ones like those used in many Western cultures.

I had assumed that environmental insecurity might lead to object attachment, too, but this was not proven to be necessarily true. The lower degree of emotional attachments to objects among Alaska Native nations is interesting, given the insecurity of their immediate environment. Yet, if we step back and consider the broader context within which these nations live, it becomes clear that the tight social bonds within these groups to some extent negates the need for individual attachment objects, at least on a widespread basis, with social

factors mediating the insecurity of the environment. From an archaeological perspective this is interesting, as it suggests that social factors are more influential than environmental factors in the use of attachment objects. In other words, an individual's immediate environment might be particularly insecure, but social bonds may bolster security without the need for attachment objects. Archaeologists have occasionally tended to approach cognition and material culture as being most strongly influenced by the environment (a habit which has received criticism (Halfon and Barkai 2020)) but the findings here suggest that social insecurity is more influential than any other factor. This is not to say that environmental insecurity is not linked to social insecurity in any way, but the findings thus far suggest that at its core, social insecurity, both short- and long-term, is the overriding factor leading to the use of attachment objects.

An interesting factor which was more prevalent in my findings than expected was that of change. This was particularly clear in the interviews carried out, in which the topic of change was mentioned frequently. In both the surveys and interviews it was apparent that longer-term situational factors such as moving abroad or losing a loved one led to individuals becoming far more attached or reliant upon cherished objects than previously. Yet, even more regular periods of stress and change seemed to increase the likelihood of an individual relying upon an object for feelings of comfort and security.

Object attachment appears, therefore, to be heavily influenced by change and insecurity, both long- and short-term. Long-term attachment relationships may provide security to someone over a prolonged period, particularly for those who are dispositionally insecure, while short-term attachments provide security on a more ad-hoc basis, especially for those who are situationally insecure. Many of the factors mentioned above can and likely do combine. A combination of personal insecurity and temporary changes in circumstances may cause a person to be even more inclined towards object attachment. Alternatively, an individual may have a secure style of attachment, but rely on a particular object at times of need, over a long period of time. Object attachment is clearly complex, combining dispositional and situational factors in the long- and short-term.

Characteristics of attachment objects

Looking at the objects themselves, too, is interesting as it may give us some insights into exactly how or why these objects come to play such a significant socio-emotional role. In this

section I will discuss the common characteristics of objects which people derive security from, beginning with physical characteristics and moving on to characteristics more related to meaning or significance. Studying these characteristics may shed light on the nature of object attachment itself, or give us an indication as to how we might see these objects in the archaeological record.

Common characteristics

Portable

I originally predicted that attachment objects would be small, to allow them to be carried or worn easily. The need to carry or wear attachment objects did prove to be a factor, but size itself was not as significant. Instead, the major factor here is portability: attachment objects are commonly portable, if not always small.

Being able to carry or wear an object is beneficial if one is looking to benefit from its presence. Among the Iñupiat and Yup'ik, play dolls for children tended to be small, and girls would often store these in a bundle wrapped up tightly together to keep them safe. Charms and amulets, however, were even smaller, and would be hung around the house, on the body and on their boats, providing a constant presence. Young children would often have these charms and amulets hung around the hood of their parka for protection. In the psychological evidence, too, most items were small or could be worn.

Interestingly, however, the large size or bulky nature of some of these objects does not prevent individuals from making these objects portable. Ethnographies of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik note that, despite their mobile lifestyle, they often carried large amounts of objects with them on their seasonal moves (Nelson 1900). Furthermore, while only anecdotal, some of the responses to the interviews in Chapter 5 noted that some participants had made the effort to move large or heavy objects that were important to them. One participant noted how she had brought her large, old typewriter on the plane when moving to a new country for study, stating that while it was a hassle to do so, "she was worth it". These demonstrate that size is not a barrier to attachment, but also that portability is perhaps more significant than size alone.

This portability is significant, allowing the individual who owns or uses the object to exert a measure of control over it, or reap its emotional benefits on a more regular basis. Unlike

human attachment figures, attachment objects can be easily moved and used, and we can benefit from them more easily as a result. This portability may make attachment objects a more constant, reliable source of comfort and security, particularly in situations of dispositional or situational insecurity.

Sensory benefits

Other common characteristics proved to be different to my initial expectations. I have previously argued that attachment objects would likely be soft, 'huggable' items (Bell and Spikins 2018) which were touched often, but this proved only partly right. In reality, while people do tend to touch these objects often, they are not overwhelmingly soft; in fact, hard objects are more common. Why this is, is unclear, but it is possible to hazard a suggestion. It may be that in situations of insecurity, whether dispositional or situational, hardness may infer a kind of permanence. In their physical security, hard objects may provide a kind of grounding effect, providing feelings of security.

Touch in general does appear to be a common characteristic of objects used to gain feelings of comfort and security. However, it was not the only sense involved in the use of these objects; as the psychological data demonstrated, even just looking at an object also proved extremely effective in providing comfort. Objects can provide quick visual reminders of a loved one or a significant event, or simply through familiarity with the object. Interestingly, in the psychological data, photographs and photo albums were popular choices for cherished objects, with these ostensibly providing a simple reminder of important people, places, or events. These objects are overwhelmingly used in a visual way, naturally. The charms hung around the hoods of Iñupiat and Yup'ik children may have functions in this way, as visual sources of security.

The significant role of touch and sight may go some way to explaining why people react so strongly to changes in their object. These objects, over time, become familiar to us. We take comfort in the way they look and feel, and thus a change in the object will be jarring. In this way, the visual, sensory and the emotional combine, and when the former are affected, so is the latter.

Whether by touch, sight, smell, sound or even, in some specific cases, taste, our senses play a significant role in the abilities of these objects to provide security. Their sensory familiarity

may bring us comfort and security at times when these are lacking, providing a physical and emotional anchor.

Uniqueness

In a somewhat familiar pattern, my assumptions at the beginning of this project, and my results, were slightly different. I had assumed that most attachment objects would follow familiar patterns, along the lines of cultural trends, but this was not entirely true.

Among the Iñupiat and Yup'ik, material culture followed familiar trends, with both human and animal-shaped dolls proving common. While objects made by different people obviously had slight variations in form, by and large much of the material culture used by these groups followed similar cultural patterns and trends. Dolls, charms, and amulets were all recognisable and followed common patterns of form unique to each nation. This may in some respects mirror these cultures themselves, and the close social relationships and interconnected nature of these societies.

In the psychological data, based on predominantly Western participants, items such as jewellery and stuffed toys were common. Yet objects which could not be easily categorised formed one of the largest categories of all, demonstrating relatively wide variation in object choice. This preference for individuality has also been noted by psychologists, with Lee and Hood (2021, 72) noting that children prefer unique objects, which they link to the child's need to use objects as an extension of their self-identity.

We have, therefore, a strange combination of both cultural trends and incredible variety. This is unsurprising; many of the items given were childhood objects or gifts, which often tend to reflect cultural preferences (such as those for jewellery or, for children, a stuffed toy). Such objects are what we might class as 'classic' Western attachment objects.

The uniqueness of these objects, however, is not just about form, but about their meaning, too. The individual meanings or memories held within attachment objects are just that – individual – and this was shown in some participants' choices of objects. One participant, for example, chose to talk about two kitchen objects, a colander, and a spatula that she had inherited from her mother, which she found comforting due to their connection to her mother and her past. She noted that, in the case of the colander, she had brought a "shiny, modern stainless steel replacement" some years before, but had never used it, in comparison to her

old one, which she continues to use. The two objects were, on the outside, the same, and from a functional point of view it might be more desirable to use the new colander, in place of the old one which “has a sheen, or polish from so much use. It has dents and is no longer round” but the meaning invested in this object ensured its continued use.

I do wonder, however, whether the difference between Alaska Native and Western cultures may be down to differences in these cultures themselves. The Iñupiat and Yup'ik are both, at heart, communal cultures, which may lead to a homogenisation of material culture, while Western cultures are often far more individualised, which could lead to a preference for unique objects. The form of attachment objects, then, will clearly be related to the culture in which they are made and used. In communal cultures, there may be specific types of objects acting as attachment figures, while highly individualised cultures may have more of a diversity in form.

Yet whether following a cultural trend or entirely unique in form, all attachment objects develop an ineffable essence which renders them uniquely valuable in the eyes of the user. Objects which may seem entirely worthless to others can hold incredible personal and emotional value for those who own or use them (Carnelley and Rowe 2007; Gillath, Selcuk and Shaver 2008; Mikulincer, Shaver and Rom 2011; Oehler and Psouni 2018; Stupica et al. 2019). In more communal cultures, however, we might expect to see more cultural trends in attachment objects, with the similarities in these objects mirroring the tight-knit social lives of such cultures.

Social significance

Whether in communal or individualistic cultures, attachment objects are commonly used because of their social significance. They are commonly gifts or reminders of loved ones, and there is a strong social element to these objects, which often remind the individual of, or represent, a loved one or an important part of their life. In short, attachment objects can reflect or represent other attachment relationships and attachment figures.

Unsurprisingly, there are clear cultural differences. In the psychological data, attachment objects were often linked to interpersonal relationships with family, friends, or romantic partners, whereas the ethnographic data from the Iñupiat and Yup'ik suggested that the objects which are most like attachment objects were those which were linked to their worldview, representing significant nonhuman species such as whales and seals which

factored heavily into their belief system. This latter pattern is unsurprising when we consider the discussion of social relationships and worldview in Chapter 7. The individuals within these social groups are intricately linked to one another, and are almost always close to family, so arguably have less need for objects reminding them of these relationships. Even where there are anthropomorphic dolls, these do not represent any particular person. The animals they hunt, however, can be more elusive, and so charms and amulets can remind them of the importance of these animals and their relationship with the wider ecosystem.

Attachment objects are inherently social, which is unsurprising given their basis in the (inherently social) attachment behavioural system. They may represent significant attachment relationships in our lives and remind us of the comfort and security that these bring. As such, it is common for the belongings of others, or gifts, to become attachment objects, as they provide a clear link to attachment figures. This social significance means that, as noted in Chapter 5, these objects may have a similar cognitive effect to that experienced from being with the associated person themselves. One of the study participants noted, of a bracelet gifted to them by their partner, *"It keeps me close to my partner even when he is away."*, while another participant noted of a drinks cabinet owned by their late grandfather, *"It reminds me of my grandad and can make me feel like I am enjoying a gin and tonic with him when things get on top of me"*. In this respect, these objects do not *passively* represent someone else; they *actively* make the user feel the presence of or the benefit of the associated attachment figure, even if they are far away or no longer alive. These objects are not just reflections of attachment figures; they actively take the place of the attachment figure, and in doing so can become attachment figures in their own right.

Mnemonic significance

These two examples above demonstrate, again, how attachment objects can provide feelings of comfort and security at times of insecurity or stress. Yet, many of these objects also have a more long-term mnemonic significance. The social and mnemonic aspects of attachment objects are similar in some respects as they are closely tied up with one another, but I have here separated them in order to discuss some of the specifics of each.

In the previous section, it was noted that attachment objects often provide a direct reminder of other attachment figures. As we have seen, these memories and feelings are powerful and long-lasting. However, while some objects are particularly significant as reminders of specific

people, places or events, some objects have a different kind of mnemonic significance, perhaps in a kind of 'muscle memory' kind of way. By this, I mean that these objects, merely by virtue of their familiarity, provide us with feelings of comfort and security so powerful that engaging with the object alone can dredge up memories and feelings of security.

Much of this may be related to the length of time that these objects have been used or owned. Attachment objects are often objects with which the user has a long history. In the interviews reported in Chapter 5, most participants spoke of objects which they had owned or used for long periods of time. The increasing length of ownership appears to strengthen the relationship with these objects, perhaps because over time these objects act as a tool to better remember happy memories and loved ones through repeated use and familiarity. One individual in the first psychological study noted of a set of dice that:

"...having them reminds me of the floor of (and therefore the whole of) my bedroom at home, and therefore of my house, and therefore of the noise of my house and of my siblings and parents. They're like a memory trigger."

It was noted earlier that people often derive benefits from attachment objects through the senses, but the mere memories associated with these objects, or the memories of the objects themselves, seem to have an incredibly powerful effect. Touch and sight are a major part of many people's interactions with attachment objects, but even the mere thought of these objects, and the memories associated with these objects, prove effective. This matches what has been seen in previous studies of 'security priming', in which the mere thought or memory of an attachment figure is enough to provide comfort, even when the attachment figure is physically elsewhere (Carnelley and Rowe 2007; Gillath, Selcuk and Shaver 2008; Mikulincer, Shaver and Rom 2011; Oehler and Psouni 2018; Stupica et al. 2019). Attachment objects may be additionally beneficial, as we can use material culture to exercise unique control over our ability to recall memories (van den Hoven, Orth and Zijlema 2021, 95). Some objects, such as photographs, might make us feel secure by reminding us of important people, places, or events, providing an anchor for these memories and making it easier to remember.

Over time, attachment objects become familiar and comforting in their own right, through both the memories that they evoke and the often positive feelings associated with these. They might provide a palpable connection to happy memories and loved ones, even when those loved ones are gone. They might provide a spiritual connection to the world around us,

reminding us of our place in the world and our relationship with other beings. Over time, this relationship becomes stronger and provides an anchor for our memories and the feelings associated with them. Simply by virtue of the length of ownership, and because of the memories we have accumulated related to the object itself, these objects may become significant in their own right. If someone uses an object to bolster their feelings of security, they may make a mental association between the object and those feelings of security, and over time they may become more dependent upon, or be able to rely upon, the same object to bring back those memories and feelings of security. Attachment objects can provide a material reminder of important memories, but we can also create memories with these objects which then prove to be significant in and of themselves.

What do these characteristics tell us about object attachment?

Attachment objects take a variety of forms, and it is quite possible that some attachment objects may not fulfil all of the criteria outlined above. Yet there are certain aspects of these objects which are particularly common, and considering these aspects may tell us something about object attachment itself.

From the physical characteristics of these objects, particularly the portability, hardness and sensory nature of many of these objects, it seems that a common prerequisite for an attachment object is a sense of *consistency* and *reliability*. The portable nature of many of these objects allows them to be carried around or worn, meaning that they are often physically close and on hand to provide security. This physical closeness allows us to engage with them as and when needed, meaning that we can derive the sensory benefits so common to these objects. In contrast to my earlier assumptions about soft objects being more desirable, hard objects seem to be far more common, and again here we have to wonder whether this is the result of a need for *permanence*, with hard objects providing feelings of constancy, their physical presence giving an underlying feeling of permanence and stability. This need for permanence, constancy, and stability are no surprise when we remember that object attachment itself is often the result of insecurity and instability. When feeling insecure, stressed or reeling from the effects of change, it is no wonder that individuals turn to objects which represent feelings entirely opposite from this.

Beyond their physical characteristics, we can also consider their underlying significance. The *uniqueness* of many of these objects appears to be another significant factor in their efficacy.

This makes me wonder whether individuals benefit from this individuality, as it allows them to imbue within these objects whatever they wish, be it a representation of a significant relationship or attachment figure, or a memory of a particular event or place. Both the uniqueness of the objects and the often long length of ownership mean that over time, these objects come to have a kind of *ineffable essence* that accords them more importance. Different people may need attachment objects at different times, and having a unique object may prove particularly effective as it can be moulded to an individual's needs.

Similarly, the *mnemonic and social significance* is another factor in the importance of these objects. Yet what is apparent is that while these objects often begin their lives as a reminder of something or someone else, over time they can become important in their own right. While in some contexts these objects function as compensatory attachment figures, providing security at times when security is otherwise difficult to find, in the more long-term these objects can become more than compensatory, becoming primary attachment figures in their own right. Attachment objects take on incredible significance in the lives of those using them, and through a combination of uniqueness and social and mnemonic significance, objects which may appear worthless to one person may be priceless to another.

These objects may begin as a simple gift or reminder, but over time they actively bolster our security again and again, as and when we need them. In doing so, these objects and the associated memories literally give people strength. Several participants in the studies outlined in Chapter 5 noted the strength they derived from their chosen object:

"It makes me feel close to my family. I wear it when I need to feel strong."

"I find strength in this ring because of the love and survival that it reminds me of."

"The necklace was a reminder of the commitment I gave to this period in my life, the love I have for my daughter, the benefits we both reaped from the experience, and the strength...to overcome my mental illness."

Altogether, this explains why, in Chapter 5, so many participants responded so strongly to questions about the breakage or loss of their object. It may be that an alteration in the physical form of the object also leads to an alteration in the object's ineffable essence. The ability to carry or wear the object may be changed, the object may look or feel different, or the total loss of the object may feel like a loss of security or memories. The strength people

gain from such objects may thus diminish or be lost completely. We saw in Chapter 7 that Alaska Native people were quite happy to throw away charms and amulets once they were perceived to have lost their power, and as the participant in Chapter 5 noted of their engagement ring:

"I didn't realise how much it did mean to me until it was damaged, and I had to ask for it to be repaired...and when I went to pick it up six weeks later, the man had just put the stones in a different setting... That ring held importance, sentimental importance to me and I didn't wear it for about 18 months, I couldn't stand to have it near me because it just felt wrong...it has tarnished it in a way, in a big way I think."

Object attachment is thus a reflection of the human need for permanence and stability. This explains why it is so common among dispositionally insecure individuals and in insecure situations. Through an intense socio-emotional bond, attachment objects can become uniquely significant in the eye of the beholder, gaining a unique, ineffable essence. They can bring us strength, but their ability to do so is fragile. In the face of breakage, change, or loss, these objects invoke strong negative reactions, and may quickly lose their worth or utility.

How does object attachment affect the objects themselves?

This strong attachment can have major effects on the objects themselves. As we have seen above, breakage or loss of an attachment object provokes a strong response in most individuals, but what about the day-to-day effects of the attachment relationship itself?

In previous work I have argued that we might expect to find attachment objects becoming very worn (Bell and Spikins 2018), due to being touched and handled repeatedly over long periods of time. As has been demonstrated here, the sensory benefits of attachment objects are significant, particularly touch. However, the object analyses carried out at the NMAI demonstrated that it is difficult to discern patterns of attachment wear from objects. For mobile societies, many objects are worn or tied to clothing, and in the case of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik, many items were worn inside layers of clothing. This led to noticeable areas of polish, but it was quite difficult to discern any particular patterns. The front and back faces of these objects were routinely the most polished overall, but this was simply because these were the areas which came into most contact with the clothing itself. From an archaeological perspective, there are a myriad of additional factors which can cause wear in the years after deposition, making this an increasingly difficult characteristic to identify in the archaeological

record. It is not impossible to study polish on these objects, but attachment-related wear requires further consideration.

On a purely anecdotal basis, attachment objects often seem to be touched in particular ways, dependent on the object but also on the person using them. A ring might be twisted around the finger or slid up and down the finger. One child might hold their teddy bear tightly, while another might drag it along the floor after them. The same person might engage with an object in more than one way, or in certain ways at certain times. The varied nature of attachment objects would, I believe, make it quite difficult to predict the form that attachment-specific wear might take, but the clear importance of touch does mean that polish and wear should be another factor to consider when analysing assemblages.

However, this is not the main focus of this thesis. I am not trying to develop a method to identify attachment objects across different cultures, as this is at best difficult and beyond the bounds of this project, and at worst arguably impossible. Looking for specific attachment objects in the archaeological record is arguably less interesting than understanding and interpreting the ways in which humans use material culture to manage and bolster their socio-emotional needs. I am not looking to provide an easy test for identifying attachment objects in past contexts; instead, I am interested in how a better understanding of object attachment and attachment objects can develop our understanding of the active socio-emotional role that material culture can and does play for many individuals and societies, now and in the past.

Different kinds of material engagement

A complicating factor to discuss here is the different kinds of material engagement, both attachment-related and not. How do we make sense of attachment objects when they can be used in so many different ways, even by the same person? Furthermore, how can we separate attachment from other forms of material engagement?

The different dimensions of object attachment

There are many different contexts in which attachment objects can be of use, which I have touched upon only implicitly so far. Humans can be attached to objects for varying amounts of time and with a varying intensity. If we think back to the contextual factors promoting object attachment, individuals who are dispositionally insecure, such as those who are more

anxiously attached, are far more likely to be attached to an object, and such attachments may be long-term. The length of ownership of many of the objects mentioned in Chapter 5 suggests that the deepest attachments to objects are those forged in the long-term through repeated use. This kind of deep-rooted cognitive attachment may lead individuals to place incredible emphasis on the significance of their relationship with an attachment object.

Yet object attachment is not always long-term. Some attachments may be more fleeting or irregular. A young child may be particularly attached to a toy or a blanket for a few months or years, using the object daily to provide comfort and security, but after some time the object may come to be less significant, used less often or may even cease to be used at all. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, too, attachment objects may be used by some people only at times of particular insecurity, as a reactive, short-term attachment figure. The two examples given in Chapter 5 – the bracelet and drinks cabinet – both demonstrate these kinds of short-term relationship. In the case of the first individual, the bracelet appears to be most beneficial on a short-term, temporary basis, when their partner is away. In the case of the drinks cabinet, again, this provides comfort and security temporarily, during periods of stress. Attachment objects may thus provide a different kind of significance depending on the user and the situation. Some individuals may find these objects beneficial on a day-to-day basis, whereas others may rely on such objects only at times of real need, times when their feelings of security are at their lowest.

The behavioural element of object attachment, too, is variable. As has already been noted here, there can be differences in how we engage with these objects. Some individuals benefit from regular haptic engagement with their attachment object, whether twisting a ring around a finger or hanging an amulet from the hood of a coat. Others may gain benefits from simply looking at an object, such as the many individuals who chose photographs in the psychological studies. Object attachment as a phenomenon may be tied down to a myriad of different behaviours and actions.

Object attachment, therefore, may be short-, medium- or long-term, and it may involve greater or lesser amounts of sensory engagement, or indeed different types of sensory engagement. These objects belie an incredible amount of variability in when and how we use them, how they are significant, and what they represent. Object attachment is far from a straightforward biological mechanism. It is the result of a multitude of social, cultural and

individual factors. As such, this is something we need to consider when thinking about object attachment in archaeological contexts, as these different kinds of attachment relationships will both have very different effects on the people using them and on the objects themselves.

Other kinds of material engagement

It is clear that attachment objects are symbolic, mnemonic and social objects, often linked to aspects of our identity. Yet the psychological and ethnoarchaeological research demonstrated that there are many other kinds of material engagement that do not bring comfort or security, but which are similar in form or significance to attachment objects. The social aspect of material culture, for example, appears to be particularly common among all personally significant material culture, not just attachment objects.

Trying to extricate object attachment from other forms of material engagement may, therefore, be a complex task. Although it is important to be aware of the differences between attachment and other meanings, trying to separate them out may not be wise, because in doing so we inevitably lose something of what these objects are. They are not always just attachment objects; they can fulfil a wide range of functions and have a wide range of meanings, and thus intersect with other themes, functions and meanings, such as status, identity and symbolism. Trying to extricate object attachment from identity in particular is almost impossible, which begs the question: is it possible to separate attachment objects from other types of objects at all? Is this a worthy endeavour, or is it a waste of our time? Due to the individuality of these objects, and the fact that attachment objects can have almost any other function, it seems difficult to clearly separate it from other types of material engagement. There are plenty of objects which fulfil both an attachment function and another function, such as showcasing status or identity, or being a useful tool.

I would argue that there is one key difference, however, between attachment objects and other objects: the way that people react to them. Attachment objects are incredibly personal, emotional objects, and as noted here already, our reactions to these objects can be strong, both positive and negative. They provide us with intense feelings of comfort and security, such that the loss or breakage of these objects evokes a similarly strong negative reaction. We may in many cases actively care for these objects, looking after them and trying to ensure that they do not meet such a fate. The definition I gave for attachment objects in earlier

chapters goes some way to setting these objects apart, though as already noted here, we must accept a degree of overlap with other kinds of material engagement.

Expectations for the archaeological record

With all of the above in mind, how might patterns of material culture change in response to an increased attachment to objects, in a way that might be visible in the archaeological record? Earlier in this chapter, different kinds of object attachment relationships were covered, both long- and short-term. Here, I will focus on object attachment in the long-term, purely because the coarse resolution of the archaeological record, particularly in prehistory, does not easily allow for analysis of object attachment on a short-term basis.

We can begin, then, to set out some specific expectations for the archaeological record. In other words, what might happen to broader assemblages when object attachment becomes a more common behaviour? It is expected that, particularly at times of long-term stress, uncertainty or insecurity (but by no means solely at these times) we will see a number of changes in patterns of material culture which reflect an increased need for compensatory attachment figures across part of, or the whole of, a population. These changes may be seen in the patterns, forms and functions of material culture as a whole.

Increased diversification of material culture

In such circumstances, we would likely see a diversification in the form of material culture in any given assemblage, with an increase in objects without a clear palaeoeconomic function. We may see an increase in seemingly *unusual* objects which are striking in their uniqueness, perhaps seeming 'out of place' compared to the rest of an assemblage. Such objects may previously have been interpreted as symbolic or ritualistic material culture, given the difficulty in understanding their function or significance.

These unusual objects may be particularly useful; as outlined above, by virtue of this uniqueness, attachment objects are afforded incredible value, which in turn appears to make them all the more effective as security primers.

Proliferation of portable objects

While these objects might be diverse, one common feature among many of them is that they are likely to be portable and thus often, but not always, small. Such objects are more easily

worn or carried for long periods of time and as such are ideal for those needing the security of an attachment figure even at a distance, or while on the move.

This point may be more difficult to differentiate among mobile societies; in the Palaeolithic, the vast majority of material culture was small or at least portable. Yet the point remains: in contexts of particular insecurity, stress or change, we would expect to see an increase in portable objects. It might be that we also see an increase in objects being made or modified to be worn close to the body, with the inclusion of facets, loops or holes for attachment to cords, bags or clothing which would demonstrate that these objects had been worn or hung. Here, it may be useful to consider how people may have made such objects easier to carry with or on them.

Increasingly worn objects

Using or wearing these objects frequently over a prolonged period, as individuals with attachment objects are wont to do, may also mean that we see an increase in particularly worn objects in the archaeological record.

At present, it appears difficult to tell apart different patterns of wear, though the presence of widespread patterns of wear or polish may yet prove to be interesting points of consideration. It may be possible to tell, to some extent, how an object was worn or carried, which may prove interesting. Specific patterns of wear that I might expect from an attachment object might be patterns of polish in particular areas, as if an object was touched or stroked in a specific way over a long period of time. A figurine, for example, might be particularly polished on the head, and this pattern might not clearly relate to polish gained from friction against a bag, clothes, or the body. If such objects were worn or carried often, this may also provide useful evidence. Physical attachments, such as holes for loops or straps, may show patterns of wear which suggest prolonged use.

When we consider these objects from an archaeological perspective we have to remember, as always, that we may be missing a great deal of information due to taphonomic and preservational factors. Hunter-gatherer dolls show that it is common to combine hard and soft materials, but in the archaeological record we will usually only see the hard materials. In reality, it is likely that perishables made up a significant proportion of prehistoric material culture (Halfon and Barkai 2020). The study of Alaska Native dolls in Chapter 7 demonstrated that a huge number of these objects were originally clothed, and after only a couple of

hundred years, with many of these items not even having been buried, they had lost their clothing. In prehistoric contexts, finding these kinds of perishable materials is even less likely.

Objects moving longer distances

The prolonged use of attachment objects also means that we may reasonably expect such objects moving longer distances across the landscape as they are carried or worn over long periods of time. Whether an object is made in one place, and is then used by someone over a long period of time and throughout long moves across the land, or whether an object is made by someone in one place and is then given to someone else who then takes it with them, in mobile prehistoric cultures in particular we are likely to see these objects moving across large distances.

However, trying to tell apart the reasons for an object's movement is difficult (Kuhn 2020, 670). How do we tell apart an unusual object which was passed from person to person as a curiosity from an unusual object carried and cherished by one person over time? In the case of lithics, Kuhn (2020, 670) notes that objects belonging to one person are likely to be identifiable through the lithics' life histories, demonstrated by high levels of reduction and reworking, while an object which was involved in exchange would not have been used a great deal prior to arrival at a site. In the case of an attachment object, however, reworking the object might be actively discouraged, to ensure that it keeps its unique essence intact. That said, an unusual object which shows little wear is perhaps far less likely to be an attachment object, or to have held any kind of socio-emotional significance. In a prehistoric context an individual would have been likely to carry anything of importance with them as they moved through the land.

Another difficulty posed by the archaeological signature of an object's movement is how to discern where an object originally came from. Even if we can track the origin of an object – in other words, where the initial raw material came from – it does not follow that this was exactly where the object was made. Where we can track raw material movement, lithics are fairly easy to trace back to their place of origin (the distance the Makapansgat pebble travelled played a significant role in Bednarik's (1998) characterisation of it as a significant piece of material culture, perhaps even a proto-attachment object) but materials such as ivory are much more difficult, if not impossible, to trace.

That said, there are routes of study which may prove fruitful. Considering both raw material provisioning and the wider significance of the raw material in question may provide one way of studying these objects, giving us indicators as to the nature of the material itself. There is likely to be a great deal of difference between an object made from a material only available some hundreds of kilometres away and an object made from a common, locally sourced material. For example, jadeite axes have been found in Neolithic Scotland, the stone for which was sourced from the Italian Alps (Pétrequin et al. 2008). It is easy to imagine such items, brought from so far away, holding incredible significance by virtue of the material used and the distance it would have had to travel. Even for a material like ivory, the source of which cannot be directly located, if there is evidence of the provisioning of this material in the area in which the object was found, it might suggest both that the material was significant in some way, but also perhaps that these objects were created and stayed within a particular area. Again, this is where context may be important. By studying these objects alongside other material culture in the same site and period, we can get some idea of the significance of the material itself, and whether the object in question is made of a material that was particularly important to the people at the time, or whether it was made of more everyday materials.

It may also be possible to use stylistic indicators to track the movement of an object, though this is fraught with difficulty, particularly given that I would expect to see increasing individualisation (although it is perfectly easy to combine both common styles and individual creativity in one object). Again, we may instead have to consider the rest of the material culture found at the same site or in the same area, to get some idea of how far an object might have travelled and how this compares to the rest of the site or assemblage. One indicator might be a sudden and steady proliferation of new, unique types of objects in a particular area.

From the above, it is clear that many of these factors are difficult to study in isolation. However, considering these factors in combination may prove an effective way of thinking about these objects. I would expect that particularly at times of change or uncertainty, when object attachment becomes far more likely, we may see a corresponding diversification of material culture, with an increase in unusual or unique objects which appear to fulfil no clear palaeoeconomic function, perhaps even unique objects which do not fit along wider trends or show a higher level of individualisation. They may have travelled a great distance from where their original raw material was sourced, which might be tracked either by studying the

raw material itself, or by looking at stylistic patterns in the area. These objects are likely to be overwhelmingly small and portable. They will be particularly worn, and may include holes for loops or straps, or patterns of polish to suggest that they were held or worn for prolonged periods of time. With regards to peoples' behaviours, these objects will have been worn or touched often, will likely show low levels of reworking, and may even have been discarded when broken or altered.

More so than form, it appears to be individuals' behaviours which most marks these out as attachment objects, so trying to determine exact physical characteristics of said objects is not necessarily as important as understanding peoples' behaviours towards these objects. I have begun, with the predictions above, to make some inferences about behaviour, such as objects being touched regularly and thus patterns of wear forming, but this is by far one of the most difficult ways we have of looking for these objects.

It is not impossible to infer behaviours from the archaeological record, however. These objects may be intimately connected with one person, due to their inherent individuality. If anything like both Western and ethnographic material culture, these objects will represent an important part of peoples' worlds, whether loved ones or significant aspects of their worldview. They are likely to represent someone or something which brings the user feelings of comfort and security. As an object belongs to someone over time, it may become so connected with them that they are eventually buried with it. Thus, grave goods may be one particularly interesting source of information and insight. This is not to say that all grave goods are attachment objects, nor that attachment objects are always connected to only one person, merely that this is one pattern of behaviour that might be easier to see in the archaeological record.

Similarly, another behaviour associated with attachment objects is a strong reaction to their loss or breakage. Indeed, any change at all is often met with a strong emotional reaction, and sometimes even a loss of attachment. It may, therefore, be useful to look at patterns of loss or breakage, in contexts in which an object has broken and thus been thrown away or abandoned. Archaeologists often tend to look at discard either as an object no longer being perceived as useful, or as having some ritual element, but it is equally possible that such objects may have been tossed away in frustration or hurt, after having been broken and thus losing their unique essence.

Object attachment in the archaeological record

We come now to an arguably more important question: how might objects reflect an increased need for compensatory attachments in certain contexts?

It can be seen above that an increase in symbolic expression may result from periods of insecurity. As insecurity increases, the need for attachment objects may become greater. This may be particularly useful in scenarios in which people are usually highly dependent upon other attachment figures, especially if those attachment figures are unavailable. This does not just apply to interpersonal attachment relationships, however: the use of material culture as attachment objects may also be useful in combatting the effects of insecurity caused by changes to the external environment, as well as the social environment. In scenarios of environmental stress, for example, if the land is no longer a source of security, either because of climate change or because an individual or group have moved into a new, unfamiliar area, material culture may provide a comforting familiarity, an anchor from which to bolster one's security. For mobile societies, then, portable material culture may have provided not just a means to display status, identity, or skill, but also may have fulfilled a psychological need for social connection and emotional security.

Periods of change and factors which might induce insecurity may be significant contextual predictors of object attachment behaviours. Situations or contexts, both long- and short-term, which increase attachment anxiety may also, therefore, lead to an increase in object attachment. Halfon and Barkai (2020, 16) have recently explored the impact of animal disappearance on Indigenous hunter-gatherers in both the past and present, concluding that symbolic material culture, including ritual and art elements, represented and reflected their emotional responses to periods of significant stress. Object attachment may represent a similar case, though the significance of their role could be taken further; rather than simply *reflecting* or *representing* this insecurity, attachment objects are a way of *actively* managing these feelings and reacting to adversity or difficulties. In this sense, attachment objects are not a passive representation of loss or of something lacking, but are instead an active means of dealing with these feelings.

These attachment objects may come, over time, to represent social and emotional relationships, whether with kin or non-kin, those in their group or outside of it. They may come to have multiple uses, whether to bolster attachment relationships with loved ones, or

to remind people of their connections with those from other groups, for whom social connection provides a lifeline in tough environments. These compensatory attachments can provide the socio-emotional need usually provided by other people, and in time, come to be significant attachment figures in their own right.

Objects may be particularly significant attachment objects because they are different from many other common attachment figures. As has already been discussed, material culture allows the user to exert a certain degree of control over it. Objects are generally inert, controllable, portable, and their meaning or significance may be unique to whomever uses it. This is unlike people, animals, or the environment, all of whom are more likely to change or fail to fulfil our attachment needs.

The benefit of small, individual objects also enables them to have an effect on a more individual level. As we have seen, attachment style varies within even small groups, and so within a culture, at any one time there may be particular individuals who have more need for an attachment object, or who might be dispositionally more inclined to use an attachment object. There might be certain parts of a culture who are more insecure, such as groups of hunters moving into new environments alone or individuals who have moved into a new group, and so objects provide a simple and unintrusive way of coping with these circumstances. The discreet nature of these objects means that they can be easily worn or even hidden away, to provide security for the specific individual who requires it.

Changes in material culture may thus reflect an increased emotional need for security, as opposed to a need to showcase our status or identity, or as a new method of expressing ourselves. As such, they represent a cultural co-option of the attachment system (Konok et al. 2016, 542). An increase in symbolic expression and a diversifying of material culture may reflect periods of increased insecurity, stress, or change. In short, these changes may demonstrate a socio-emotional response to external influences.

Summary

There has been controversy over whether nonhuman beings can reasonably be classed as attachment figures. However, when we look at how attachment figures have been described by other authors (Ainsworth 1993, 37–38; Zeifman and Hazan 2016, 420–423), it becomes clear that they genuinely are significant attachment figures in their own right. They provide care,

they are unique to the individual, and they take on incredible social and emotional importance. We seek proximity to them in times of need, and in doing so, they provide us with incredible comfort and security. Attachment objects are not compensatory or secondary attachment figures, but can act as significant primary attachment figures as and when needed.

There is an incredible amount of variation within our capacity for object attachment, both in the objects themselves and the people who use them. This is fascinating, as it demonstrates the plasticity of the human mind and the differing ways in which we engage with material culture in order to react to our personal emotional needs.

The uniqueness and diversity of both attachment objects and attachment behaviour makes these objects particularly difficult to study, given the myriad of ways in which people can use them and the variety of forms that they can take. Yet the points made in this chapter begin to lead us to some of the overarching similarities between many of these objects, and thus provide us with a starting point when analysing archaeological assemblages, sites and material culture. Furthermore, this *problem* is not necessarily a problem – in fact, it provides a useful reminder that attachment objects are rarely *just* attachment objects, but they often have other functions, too.

This thesis is not aimed at identifying specific attachment objects in the archaeological record. Even if we were able to do so with any certainty, this is arguably less interesting and less insightful than is understanding the role that these objects may have played. One of the main aims of this research is to discern a better understanding of cultures in the past by thinking about how changes in broad patterns of material culture may reflect socio-emotional needs, as opposed to the need to, for example, create markers of identity and status.

When we think about the intersection of social, emotional and material life in the past, it allows us to consider how this may explain patterns that we see in the archaeological record. A consideration of these elements offers the potential to think about the past in a more holistic way. If we ignore emotion and the impact that emotions have upon us, and the ways in which material culture is inextricably tied up in webs of relations, too, we are in danger of ignoring one of the things that makes life – and therefore, the study of archaeological cultures – most interesting.

Object attachment presents a useful way to think about how humans cope with insecurity and stress. Whether it be changes in the environment, moving away from a place you have always known, or the loss of a loved one, the ability to cope with threats to our security is vital to our ability to survive and thrive, even in the face of adversity. Even further than this, however, it impacts our broader socio-emotional lives. As already noted in Chapter 2, enhanced attachment security can make us more empathetic, more willing to explore, better problem-solvers and can even buffer pain. This ability to be attached to objects is a material example of how humans cope with adversity, and demonstrates our capacity to adapt to what life throws at us.

As we will see in the following chapter, the Upper Palaeolithic is often presented as a story of survival against the elements, of short, brutish, difficult lives framed by the environmental stresses of the Ice Age. We often talk about how people in the Palaeolithic managed to find enough food and stay safe, but we less often consider how people managed to maintain social and emotional security, with all of the cognitive benefits this affords. Object attachment may provide an alternative way to consider the intersection of social, emotional and material lives in the Palaeolithic. The next chapter focuses specifically on the Swabian Aurignacian, some 40,000 years ago.

Chapter 9

Rethinking Material Culture in the Swabian Aurignacian: An Attachment Perspective

Archaeologists increasingly recognise the power of objects as sources of attachment throughout (and even after) life. Büster (2021), for example, has recently discussed the notion of 'problematic objects' associated with loved ones who have passed away, and how humans cope with their continuing attachment to such objects, even when we wish to throw them away.

Attachment is a powerful force driving our thoughts and behaviours, including how we use and relate to the objects around us. In this thesis I have demonstrated how the psychological theory of attachment can be a useful way to think about our socio-emotional connection to material culture. Now that we have a clearer idea of the ramifications of an increased attachment to objects, it is time to consider how these insights might shape our interpretation of the archaeological record.

In the previous chapter, I outlined four predictions for what we might expect to see in the archaeological record with regards to attachment objects. I noted that, particularly (but by no

means exclusively) at times of great stress, uncertainty or insecurity, we might expect to see changes in patterns of material culture in the archaeological record, reflecting an increased need for compensatory attachment figures. These changes are likely to be seen in the form of an increased diversification of material culture, a proliferation of portable objects, an increase in worn objects, and objects moving much longer distances.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how these predictions may be helpful in reassessing changing patterns of material culture in past contexts, focusing specifically on human and animal figurative representations found at four Aurignacian sites in the Swabian Jura, a region in southwestern Germany. These are objects which are unusual for their time, both in quantity and quality. They took a long time to make, were touched or used a great deal, and most were found among everyday detritus, close to hearths and even musical instruments. There is no evidence of figurative representations in the few open-air sites in the region (though this may be due to taphonomy more than anything else), so these objects are unique to these cave sites. While there are less than forty figurines whose form can be reliably identified, there are hundreds of additional fragments, so these figurines appear to have been common at the time.

There have been multiple, varying interpretations of the Swabian figurines over many decades. Yet none truly consider their socio-emotional significance. The notion that emotion is important is alluded to by some authors but is rarely, if ever, considered explicitly. In this chapter, I will reappraise these figurines, reconsidering how an attachment perspective may provide a useful way of reinterpreting their purpose and meaning. This new perspective can shed light on the transformative socio-emotional role of material culture, demonstrating the enduring socio-emotional relationship between humans and the things around them.

Historical background: the Aurignacian

Around 50,000 years ago (ka), we see a shift from the Middle to the Upper Palaeolithic in Europe, marked by changes in the environment, social life and material culture, as well as the gradual disappearance of all human species bar *Homo sapiens*. One of the earliest technocomplexes of the European Upper Palaeolithic is known as the Aurignacian, a term coined in the early 20th century by Henri Breuil, derived from the type site of Aurignac in south-west France (Breuil 1913).

This was the first technocomplex in Eurasian prehistory associated solely with anatomically modern humans, covering vast swathes of Europe and western Asia (Cortés-Sánchez et al. 2019, 207; Teyssandier and Zilhão 2018, 108). The Aurignacian occurred during Marine Isotope Stage 3 (MIS3), a volatile period with major climatic fluctuations lasting from 60 to 25ka. The Aurignacian itself began during a particularly cold period around 42.5ka cal BP (calibrated years before present, meaning the date here has been adjusted to be more accurate) and ending in around 33ka (Bataille and Conard 2018; Rhodes et al. 2018, 200).

Aurignacian people's lives were characterised by a high level of residential mobility (Dinnis et al. 2019), but the wider population was small, with a likely mean of ~1500 people living in Europe (range: 800 to 3300) (Schmidt and Zimmermann 2019). There were, however, regional differences in population size and density, with some areas of Europe apparently completely empty (Schmidt and Zimmermann 2019, 8). The *Homo sapiens* of Aurignacian Europe had a different social structure to that which had come before, with the introduction of highly diversified social networks.

This period also saw numerous innovations in technology and symbolism. Their bladelet and microblade technologies are key markers of this period, as are carinated and end scrapers, and, importantly, the production of organic tools made from bone and antler, particularly split-based points (Bataille, Tafelmaier and Weniger 2018, 3; Dinnis et al. 2019). Attempts have also been made to use personal ornaments as markers of this period, given their ubiquity (Vanhaeren and D'Errico 2006). Material culture changed not just in form, but in the pace and the extent of change, with a greater pace of change in lithic industries, a sizeable increase in mobiliary and parietal art and personal ornaments, increased transport distances, the beginnings of formal ritualised burial, new forms of storage and settlement, and even a move to semi-permanent sites (French 2021; Nowell 2013; Shultz, Nelson and Dunbar 2012, 2137).

The Aurignacian is probably best known as one of the first Palaeolithic technocomplexes to use symbolic material culture on a broad scale (Dutkiewicz, Wolf and Conard 2018, 30). In this period, we see the first unambiguous examples of figurative art, musical instruments, personal ornaments, therianthropes and generalised use of previously rarely-exploited materials such as bone, ivory, antler, and soapstone (Dinnis et al. 2019; Floss 2018, 21–22; Wolf 2015a, 92). However, these wider trends belie a great deal of regional variation (Floss 2018; Porr 2010a, 91). An increasing number of Palaeolithic archaeologists have remarked on

the need to analyse and interpret Aurignacian material culture, and that of the Upper Palaeolithic generally, in relation to its local and regional contexts (Nowell 2013; Porr 2010a, 91).

Historical background: the Swabian Jura



Figure 9.1: The location of the four sites covered in this Case Study. The Danube River can be seen running a few kilometres southeast of all four sites.

One regional variant can be found in the Swabian Jura, in southwestern Germany (Figure 9.1). The Swabian Jura is a plateaued region on a medium-sized mountain range, 200km by 40km, with a maximum altitude of around 1km (Floss 2018, 22). The earliest and largest distribution of Aurignacian sites in Germany can be found here, dating between 42 and 30ka cal BP, in the Ach and Lone Valleys (Bulus 2003, 153; Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 449; Floss 2018, 28; Igarashi and Floss 2019, 202; Richard et al. 2019). The Ach Valley is deeply incised, while the Lone Valley

is dominated by open grassland at a lower elevation (Kitagawa et al. 2012, 441). While Palaeolithic climate and subsistence are relatively well understood for this region, there are questions surrounding mobility and occupation. There are comparatively few open-air sites in the area (Conard and Bolus 2006, 217; Floss 2007, 295), likely due to taphonomic issues. There are, however, several cave sites which have unearthed rich lithic and organic assemblages. The stratigraphy and archaeological finds from these cave sites show that they were occupied on and off from the Middle Palaeolithic until as late as the Neolithic in some cases, with occupation first by Neanderthals and later by Anatomically Modern Humans (AMHs) (Bolus 2015a, 32).

However, while the archaeological finds are rich, there is little direct evidence of humans. There is only one Neanderthal femur and a handful of AMH teeth at Sirgenstein, and possibly Hohlenstein-Stadel (Bolus 2015a, 43; Bolus 2015b, 170; Conard 2011, 223). Neanderthals used the caves sporadically and for shorter periods, sharing the space with carnivores such as cave bears (Bolus 2015a, 41; Conard 2011, 223; Rhodes et al. 2018, 200). The Neanderthals eventually left the region for good, likely due to the worsening climate of the Late Middle Palaeolithic, and until the Aurignacian the region was unoccupied by humans (Bolus 2015a, 41; Conard 2011, 223; Staubwasser et al. 2018; Velliky, Porr and Conard 2018). It is after this point that we see modern humans in the region for the first time.

Unfortunately, because of both the poor resolution of the archaeological data and the questionable techniques originally used to excavate the Swabian caves, it is difficult to determine the frequency and extent of Aurignacian occupations. The material evidence from the Swabian cave sites suggests a cohesive culture with a clear lithic industry and cultural trends in personal ornamentation and symbolic material culture. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the Swabian archaeological record represents different groups at different cave sites, all with a shared culture, or whether one group was moving between all of the sites, all of which are within a day's walk from one another. Similarly, it is unknown whether the material culture resulted from one occupation or a series of occupations over a longer period (Dutkiewicz, Wolf and Conard 2018).

However, we do know that occupation of this region increased considerably during the Aurignacian period. The Aurignacian was much colder than the Middle Palaeolithic, with a drastic increase in cold tundra species, and a move towards a cold, dry, mammoth steppe

environment (Rhodes et al. 2018, 218; Richard et al. 2020, 134). Yet, despite the less hospitable climatic conditions at the beginning of the Aurignacian, the archaeological evidence suggests that when the area was repopulated, there was significantly higher site occupation than in the preceding Middle Palaeolithic (Rhodes et al. 2018, 202, 220).

The Swabian Jura was likely first frequented by Aurignacian hunter-gatherers because it was protected from the worst of the climate, with a relatively favourable micro-climate (Bulus 2015a, 32; Hein 2007, 345). Despite the difficult climatic conditions of the early Aurignacian, overall, the Aurignacian climate was still relatively stable, being comparatively warm and wet, with minor cold fluctuations. It became much colder during the Gravettian and Magdalenian, with deteriorating climate forcing its abandonment from the Gravettian until around 13ka (Barbieri et al. 2018; Conard 2011, 230; Riehl et al. 2015, 151).

Floss (2015b, 322) argues that though the area was relatively isolated, people here would have had access to everything they needed, with the area rich in game, shelter, and raw materials. The Swabian Jura, being so close to the Danube River, would have also provided a major location for animal and human movement, including perhaps the facilitation of trade (Floss 2015b, 322). Raw material transport distances increased across the whole of the Upper Palaeolithic, and in this region, evidence shows distances of 160 to 180km, and in the case of some flint at Hohlenstein-Stadel, up to 400km (Féblot-Augustins 2009, 40–41), although there is always the difficult question as to whether these represent trade, or simply one group's journey from one place to another.

Subsistence in the Upper Palaeolithic of this region was based primarily on horse and reindeer, just as in the Middle Palaeolithic (Bulus 2015a, 43). The low elevation and open grassland of the Lone Valley meant that there were many horses there during the Palaeolithic (Kitagawa et al. 2012, 441). With regards to faunal evidence, woolly rhino was more abundant in the Middle Palaeolithic, and mammoth more common in the Upper Palaeolithic, but the latter could reflect the importance of mammoth bones and ivory as a raw material (Conard 2011, 230). While large game exploitation remained broadly similar between the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, small game exploitation gradually increased over time, and bird exploitation heavily increased (Conard et al. 2013). Overall, there was a low availability and variety of plant food, which meant a higher reliance on hunted and fished resources, of which there would have been many (Riehl et al. 2015, 163–164). As Riehl et al. (2015, 164) have noted,

living in an area so sensitive to ecological change would have required highly adaptive flexibility from humans, but would also have provided a broader spectrum of subsistence resources. Within this region, there was both risk and opportunity.

Sites covered in this Case Study

In this chapter I will focus specifically on the Aurignacian period at four cave sites in the Swabian Jura: Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels in the Ach Valley, and Hohlenstein-Stadel and Vogelherd in the Lone Valley (Figure 9.1). I have chosen these sites as they are the four sites at which we have evidence of carved and engraved figurines, which will form the focus of this Case Study.

Faunal evidence suggests that these sites were occupied during the winter and spring during the Upper Palaeolithic (Münzel and Conard 2004), but as Velliky et al. (2020, 15) have noted, the lack of surviving open-air sites makes this difficult to say with certainty. However, the Aurignacian deposits at all four sites are incredibly rich, and when we consider how early these sites were first used in comparison to the rest of Europe, it is clear that the Swabian Jura was a key region for settlement and innovation during the early stages of the European Upper Palaeolithic (Niven 2003, 199).

At each site, the Aurignacian assemblages are richer, both in terms of the quantity and range of artefacts, than those that came before and after. The Middle Palaeolithic assemblages are sparse, with a few organic tools and sparse lithic assemblages (Bulus 2015b, 170, 172). All sites then show a clean break between the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. The Aurignacian contexts have a much higher find density (ten to 100 times more artefacts) and a plethora of new artefact types: lithic and organic tools, personal ornaments (dominated by a unique regional style of double perforated ivory bead), figurative art and musical instruments (Bulus 2015a, 41, 2015b, 172; Conard 2011, 223, 231; Wolf 2015a, 99; Wolf and Heckel 2018, 354), though unusually for western Europe, the Swabian Jura lacks parietal art (Wolf et al. 2018, 191). This evidence all appears fully formed, suggesting that the Swabian Aurignacian was fully developed from its beginning (Bulus 2015b, 172). After the Aurignacian, in the Lone Valley, Hohlenstein-Stadel and Vogelherd were not used during the proceeding Gravettian period. In the Ach Valley, Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels may have had some continuity between the Aurignacian and Gravettian, but this cannot be said with any certainty, due to the resolution of the data.

Geißenklösterle

Situated in the Ach Valley, Geißenklösterle is home to the earliest Aurignacian evidence in this region. Its archaeological levels span the Middle Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic, with two Aurignacian layers, lower Aurignacian horizon III (AH III) and upper Aurignacian horizon II (AH II). The dating of this site has been the subject of debate (see Higham et al. 2012), but the lower Aurignacian at Geißenklösterle began around 42,500 cal BP, clearly predating the Proto-Aurignacian and Early Aurignacian of other regions (Higham et al. 2012, 673–675) (for a more detailed list of dates for this site, see Table 9.1), with the upper Aurignacian dating to between 38 and 40 ka. Geißenklösterle thus represents one of the earliest, if not the earliest, sustained Aurignacian occupations in Europe.

Geißenklösterle demonstrates what has been called a “fully developed Aurignacian” from the lower Aurignacian onwards (Bolus 2003, 153), evidenced by the rich nature of the archaeological finds. There is clear evidence of settlement features throughout the Aurignacian, such as a fireplace (AH III) and burnt bones (AH II) (Bolus 2003; Bolus 2015a, 39). The preceding Middle Palaeolithic has no settlement features, and in the later Upper

Site	Date Range (ka cal BP)	Archaeological Horizon (AH)	AH Date Range (ka cal BP)	Reference
Geißenklösterle	34-43	II (upper)	38-40	(Higham et al. 2012)
		III (lower)	41-43	(Higham et al. 2012)
			37 ± 3	(Richard et al. 2020, 143)
Hohle Fels	34-42/44	IId* and Ile*	31.3-35.6	(Bataille and Conard 2018)
			33.8-34.7	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)
		IIIa and IIIb	36.6	(Bataille and Conard 2018)
			35.7-36.7	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)
		IV	39	(Bataille and Conard 2018)
			34-38	(Dinnis et al. 2019, 10)
		Va	41	(Bataille and Conard 2018)
			40.2-41.2	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)
Hohlenstein-Stadel	35-41	Vb	42-44	(Bataille and Conard 2018)
			41.3-44.1	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)
		Ao	35.6-36.9	(Ebinger-Rist et al. 2018, 420)
		Am	37.2-38.8	(Ebinger-Rist et al. 2018, 420)
Vogelherd	34.5-40	Au	39.4-41.1	(Ebinger-Rist et al. 2018, 420)
		IV	35-36.1	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)
		V	34.5-40.5	(Velliky et al. 2021, 5)

Table 9.1: Date ranges for the Aurignacian archaeological horizons at Geißenklösterle, Hohle Fels, Hohlenstein-Stadel and Vogelherd. I have included multiple dates for some of the sites, as all have had their dates repeatedly calculated using different methods. ‘ka cal BP’ means the calibrated age of the layer (in 1000s of years). *These two horizons represent the Aurignacian-Gravettian transition.

Palaeolithic the evidence for occupation and use of the cave is at a far lower density (Münzel and Conard 2004, 226).

Lithic manufacture took place here, with the presence of carinated and nosed endscrapers, large blades with lateral retouch and busked and carinated burins (Richard et al. 2020, 134). There are also numerous organic artefacts, both ivory and osseous, including projectile points and ivory rods (Bolus 2003, 155; Bolus 2015a, 39). Aside from technology and subsistence, the finds found at Geißenklösterle are abundant and wide-ranging, with the number ranging in the tens of thousands (Conard, Dippon and Goldberg 2003, 166).

There is much evidence for ivory working, as well as the products of this manufacture (Conard and Malina 2008, 16). In AH III, at least seven pendants of varying forms have been found, mostly in or near the fireplace (Bolus 2015a, 40). In AH II, there are a dozen double perforated ivory beads, a pendant made of reindeer antler, decorated antler rods and some pendants made of fish vertebrae and coloured red (Münzel and Conard 2004, 227). The figurative representations for which Geißenklösterle is famous were all found in AH II (Figure 9.2), with two mammoths, a bison, a bear and a potentially therianthropomorphic figurine often called the 'Adorant'. These were found along with two flutes made from swan bones among ordinary lithic and faunal waste (Conard and Malina 2008, 16; Floss 2015a, 325). For more specific details about each figurine, including their dimensions, see Appendix 3.

Throughout the Aurignacian, then, Geißenklösterle was routinely used, at the least during the winter and spring, by *Homo sapiens*. We have evidence of settlement features and intense ivory and lithic production. Ivory working was more intense in AH III, but this earlier period lacks the diversity of ornaments, artwork and musical instruments found in the latter AH II (Higham et al. 2012, 665–666). Geißenklösterle was used intensely during the Aurignacian, more so than the preceding period, and more than in later periods, too.

Hohle Fels

Hohle Fels is one of the largest sites in the Swabian Jura, located in a limestone cliff in the Ach Valley (Bolus 2015a, 40). Behind the north-west facing entrance, there is a tunnel-like passage 29 metres long with a niche halfway along. This expands to both sides and leads into a large cave hall 23 metres long, with a maximum height of 30m and measuring 500m² at the base (Bataille and Conard 2018).

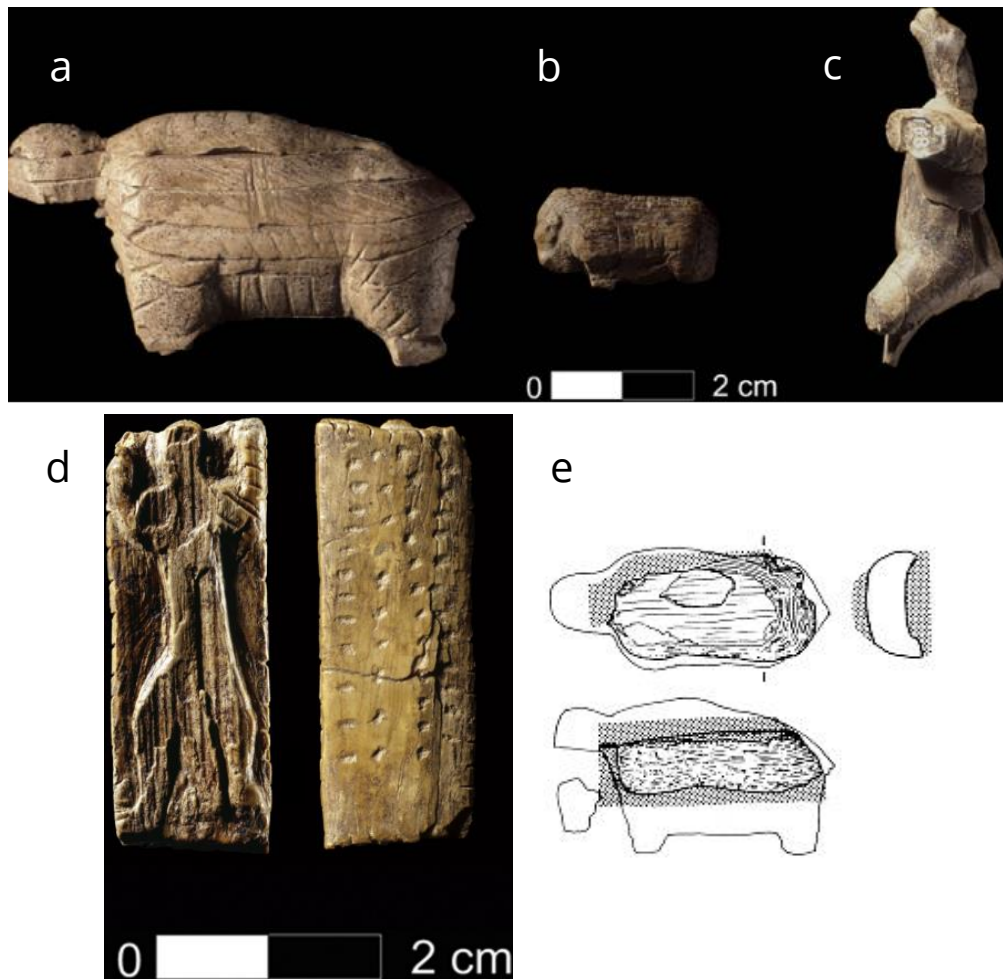


Figure 9.2: Figurines and fragments from Geißenklösterle covered in this chapter: a) mammoth, b) bison, c) bear, d) the 'Adorant', e) fragment, likely from a mammoth figurine. Source: Urgeschichtes Museum Blaubeuren/Landesmuseum Württemberg.

There is evidence for limited occupation in both the Middle Palaeolithic and post-Aurignacian periods, but I will focus here on the seven Aurignacian layers at Hohle Fels. Levels Vb, Va, IV, IIIb and IIIa date to between 44200 and 34280 cal BP (Table 9.1), probably preceding the lower Aurignacian levels at Geißenklösterle. IIe and IId represent the Aurignacian-Gravettian transition, these latter two layers having a lower find density (Bataille and Conard 2018; Dinnis et al. 2019; Riehl et al. 2015, 152; Wolf 2015a, 93), in keeping with the general trend of Swabian Aurignacian layers being richer. The Aurignacian layers show evidence for both technological and symbolic innovations (Conard and Malina 2019).

As at Geißenklösterle, there has been debate regarding the dating of some of the layers, due to stratigraphic problems (Dinnis et al. 2019, 33). This in turn has stimulated debate over Hohle Fels' lithic assemblages. Analyses of blades and bladelets at Hohle Fels by Bataille and Conard (2018) led the authors to conclude that lithic production in the Swabian Aurignacian

was different to the rest of the western European Aurignacian, with a higher “techno-functional variability” than previously assumed. This interpretation was critiqued by Dinnis et al. (2019) who criticised the use of problematic radiocarbon dates and argued that Hohle Fels does, in fact, share a similar lithic assemblage to other contemporaneous lithic industries.

While there is ample evidence of stone tools at the site, including carinated and nosed endscrapers, busked and carinated burins, blades and bladelets (Bulus 2015a, 41; Conard and Malina 2019, 58), a lack of debitage and cores suggests that lithic tool production was not undertaken at Hohle Fels. However, the site had other uses. An abundance of butchery marks on animal bones seem to indicate the use of the site for food processing (Münzel et al. 2017, 190). Riehl et al. (2015, 163–164) have noted that the low availability of plant food in the area would have meant higher reliance on hunted and fished resources, so Hohle Fels would have been an important area for the processing of food so important to daily subsistence.

Besides butchery, during the same period, intensive ivory working occurred here (Münzel et al. 2017, 193; Schiegl et al. 2003, 550), though not to the extent seen at Vogelherd, as we will see later. Organic tools, such as a few split-base points, were found, but much of the organic material at Hohle Fels comes in the form of personal ornaments and, to a lesser extent, figurative representations (Bulus 2015a, 41). 217 beads were found, varying in size and shape, though the region’s unique double-perforated style is most common ($n = 124$). The site also holds ivory bands which may have been sewn on clothing (Bulus 2015a, 41). While the Middle Palaeolithic layers had virtually no symbolic or cultural artefacts, the Aurignacian archaeological record is incredibly rich, with thousands of ivory artefacts, hundreds of ochre artefacts and numerous personal ornaments (Barth, Conard and Münzel 2009, 7; Velliky, Porr and Conard 2018, 2).

In the Aurignacian layers, four figurines or fragments of figurines have been found, as well as another partial figurine in the Aurignacian-Gravettian transition layers (Figure 9.3). These figurines are varied, with two animal figurines (horse and waterbird), one apparent hybrid miniature ‘Lion-Man’ and two human figurines. Hohle Fels is the only site at which we see anthropomorphic figurines, represented by the famous female figurine of Hohle Fels, as well as a partial fragment thought to be another female figurine. As at Geißenklösterle, three flutes were found in the same layer as, and 70 centimetres from, some of the figurines, and seem

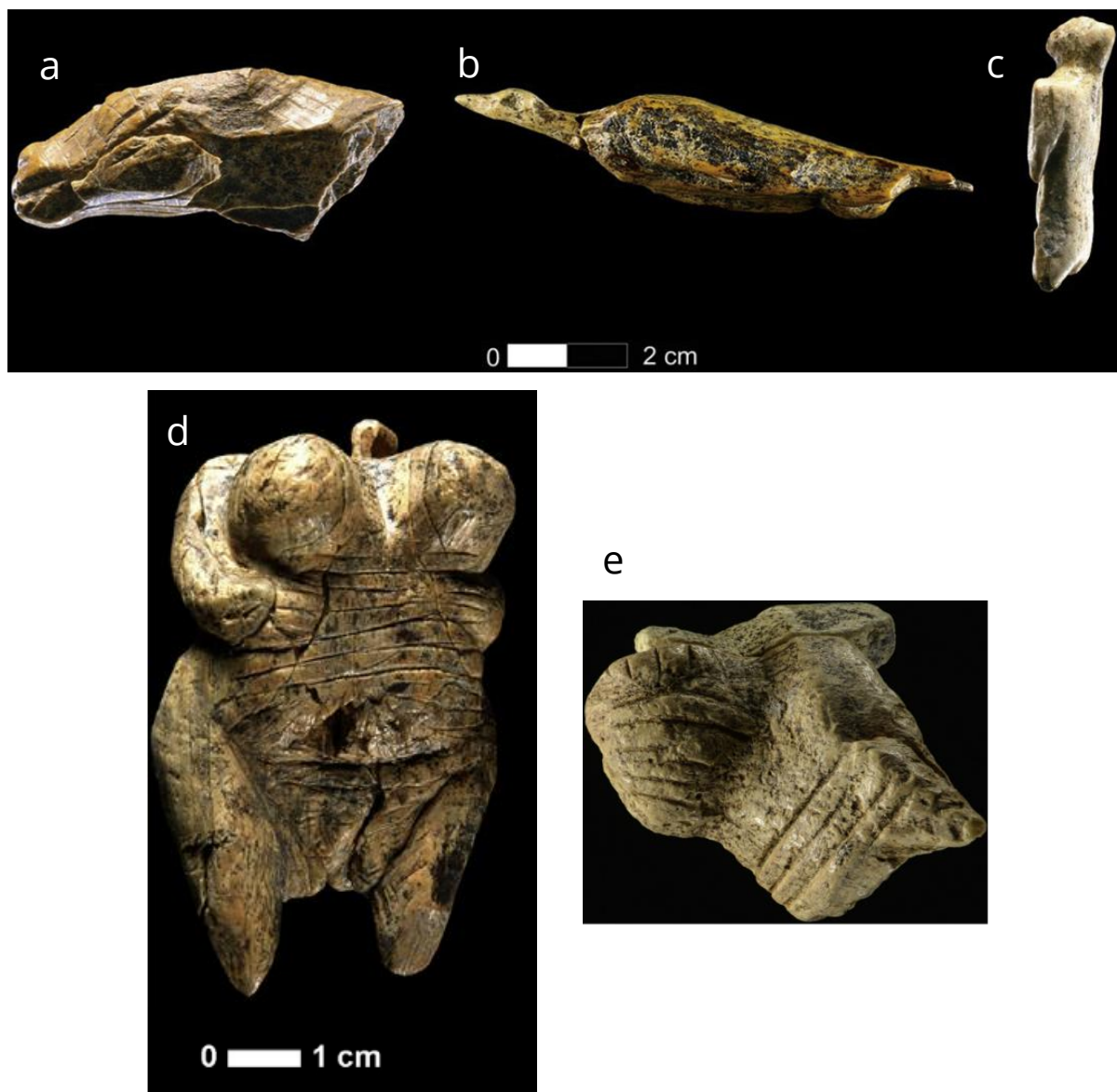


Figure 9.3: Figurines and fragments from Hohle Fels covered in this chapter: a) horse head, b) waterfowl, c) 'Little Lion Man', d) female figurine, e) fragment, likely from another female figurine. Source: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018).

to have been placed or left in the cave in an unstructured way (Conard 2015, 10; Conard, Malina and Münzel 2009, 739; Floss 2018, 25).

Similarly to Geißenklösterle, Hohle Fels was regularly used for a variety of reasons, particularly butchery and ivory processing, and to a far greater extent than in the preceding Middle Palaeolithic. Again, the Aurignacian at this site is unique, being the only period in which we see carved figurative representations alongside a whole host of other artefacts.

Hohlenstein-Stadel

Of all the cave sites of the Swabian Jura, Hohlenstein-Stadel is particularly unusual. Situated in the Lone Valley, it consists of a 50-metre-long cave, two kilometres from Vogelherd (Bolus

2015a, 35; Wehrberger 2007, 331). Its archaeological levels date from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Neolithic, and unlike the previous two sites from the Ach Valley, Hohlenstein-Stadel has no Gravettian layers (Münzel et al. 2017, 186). The three Aurignacian layers, Au, Am and Ao, date to between 41 and 35.6 ka cal BP (Ebinger-Rist et al. 2018, 418).

Humans, both Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*, appear to have lived in the cave during harsh climatic phases (Richard et al. 2019). However, given that the cave faces north away from the sun, and the fact that there is little material culture in the cave compared to Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels, Cook (2017) has argued that this site would probably not have been a place where people lived. While there is, unusually for this region, evidence of human remains from the Middle Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic, there is next to no cultural material (Bolus 2015a, 35; Ebinger-Rist et al. 2018, 418; Richard et al. 2019; Wehrberger 2007, 333). Yet this site is also the location of one of the most famous pieces of Palaeolithic sculpture in the world: the so-called 'Lion-Man' (Figure 9.4), which was found in the deepest recess of the cave.

Hohlenstein-Stadel appears to be a particularly inhospitable site, not used for human occupation in the long-term, if at all. Instead, this cave likely had some other kind of significance, given the presence of the Lion-Man figurine.

Vogelherd

The final cave site included in this Case Study is the one which has given us the most evidence for human occupation in the Swabian Aurignacian. Located in the middle of the Lone Valley, five to ten kilometres north of the Danube River, Vogelherd was the site of such intense occupation that it has the largest Aurignacian assemblage in central Europe (Conard, Malina and Münzel 2009, 740). Vogelherd consists of three converging galleries (north, south, and south-west), two of which are ten metres in length, and the third (north) of which is closed by debris and is too small to be an entrance. All three galleries meet in a central chamber, forming a Y-shape (Bolus 2015a, 36; Dutkiewicz 2015, 75; Floss 2018, 25). Altogether, the cave has a surface area of 170m² and a ceiling height of three to four metres (Dutkiewicz 2015, 75).

The cave's topographical location, 18 metres above the floor of the valley and with multiple entrances, would have made it an excellent location for monitoring the movements of game, and together with its proximity to different resources, it is no surprise that this site was used so intensively (Niven 2003, 209; Porr 2010b, 155). It was a fairly open site which was widely



Figure 9.4: The 'Lion-Man' figurine from Hohlenstein-Stadel. Source: State Office for Cultural Heritage Baden-Württemberg and Ulmer Museum.

visible, and the terraces would have provided space for activities, though the openness of the site would also have meant that it was very windy (Münzel et al. 2017, 187; Niven 2007; Porr 2010b, 156).

There are eight Palaeolithic layers: four for both the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, with the two periods separated by a sterile layer (Niven 2007, 365). In the Upper Palaeolithic there are two Aurignacian layers (IV and V), no Gravettian layers and two Magdalenian levels (Dutkiewicz 2015, 75). Similarly to the other caves of the Swabian Jura, Vogelherd appears to have been

occupied only in the short-term both prior to and following the Aurignacian, based on the density of tool accumulations and lithic evidence (Dutkiewicz 2015, 75–76; Floss 2014, 55; Münzel et al. 2017, 186; Niven 2007, 363). As at Geißenklösterle, there are arguments over the dating of Vogelherd due to the questionable standards of the original excavations (Conard 2007a, 324; Wehrberger 2007, 345). Much of the material discovered in more recent excavations was recovered during excavation and sieving of the backdirt left on the slope in front of the cave (Conard 2007a, 325; Conard, Zeidi and Janas 2016; Dutkiewicz, Wolf and Conard 2018, 31; Porr 2010b, 155). The most recent research (Table 9.1) suggests that the lower Aurignacian AH V dates to between 34.5 ka cal BP, while upper Aurignacian layer IV dates to between 35 and 36.1 ka cal BP (Velliky et al. 2021, 5).

Niven (2003, 200, 208) has noted that the wealth of Aurignacian material suggests that the site was probably occupied on multiple occasions though, as noted previously, this latter point is likely to remain conjecture. The intensity of occupation and the richness of the material culture, in both quantity and quality, during the Aurignacian has led Porr (2010b, 155) to argue that Vogelherd may have been a predecessor to the more permanently occupied campsites of the Gravettian, and it is hard to argue with his assessment. Aurignacian cultural materials were found throughout the cave, with six hearths around the entrances (Porr 2010b, 155). There is a rich lithic assemblage, the largest Aurignacian animal bone assemblage in the Swabian Jura (including a large number of horses), organic tools, and small ivory figurines (Bulus 2015a, 36, 2015b, 176; Dutkiewicz 2015, 76; Münzel et al. 2017, 187; Niven 2003, 199).

The evidence suggests that processing of both horse and mammoth remains occurred on-site. Münzel et al. (2017, 188) have referred to this as a 'hot spot' for mammoth processing in the Lone Valley, and that the timing of occupations was based on the seasonal availability of prey (Niven 2007, 377). Faunal remains were found in front of the south and south-west entrances, including carefully constructed piles of mammoth bones and tusks, as well as a stock of ivory plaques placed on top of one another (Münzel et al. 2017, 192; Niven 2003, 208; Porr 2010b, 155). Finds concentrations show that there were specific areas for work. The south-west entrance was where ivory working took place, with many of the ivory artefacts found here (Conard, Zeidi and Janas 2016; Dutkiewicz 2015, 76; Wolf 2015a, 96).

Only during re-excavations of the backdirt were personal ornaments and figurines found (Dutkiewicz 2015, 76). Many of these finds thus have no stratigraphic context (Floss 2015a,

325; Wolf 2015a, 94); archaeologists know which layer, but not the exact location (Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 449; Hahn 1986, 18). Riek's letters suggest that most personal ornaments were found in the central hall at the mouth of the eastern corridor, at the back of the main room, near the right wall (Dutkiewicz 2015, 76; Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 449; Riek 1934, 289). As such, we only have details of the provenance of ten of out of the twenty-four figurines clearly identifiable from this site (although it must be noted that hundreds of fragments have been found, so these equal only a fraction of what was once here). Of the ten figurines for which we have more detail, most were found in the south-west entrance, and yet others appear to have been concentrated at the intersection of the three galleries (Floss 2018, 25).

In lower Aurignacian AH V, there were six ivory figurines (Figures 9.5 and 9.6) representing two mammoths, a reindeer or feline, a feline, a bear or feline, and a horse (Hein 2007, 346). All are no longer than a few centimetres in length. One of the mammoth figurines consists of two separate pieces which are suspected to belong to the same figurine, so I have treated them as such here (see Figure 9.6). In the upper Aurignacian level IV, there were four figurines, three made of ivory and one of antler (Figure 9.7). The ivory figurines are, like those in AH V, small, representing a cave lion, bison and a probable therianthrope figure, potentially a

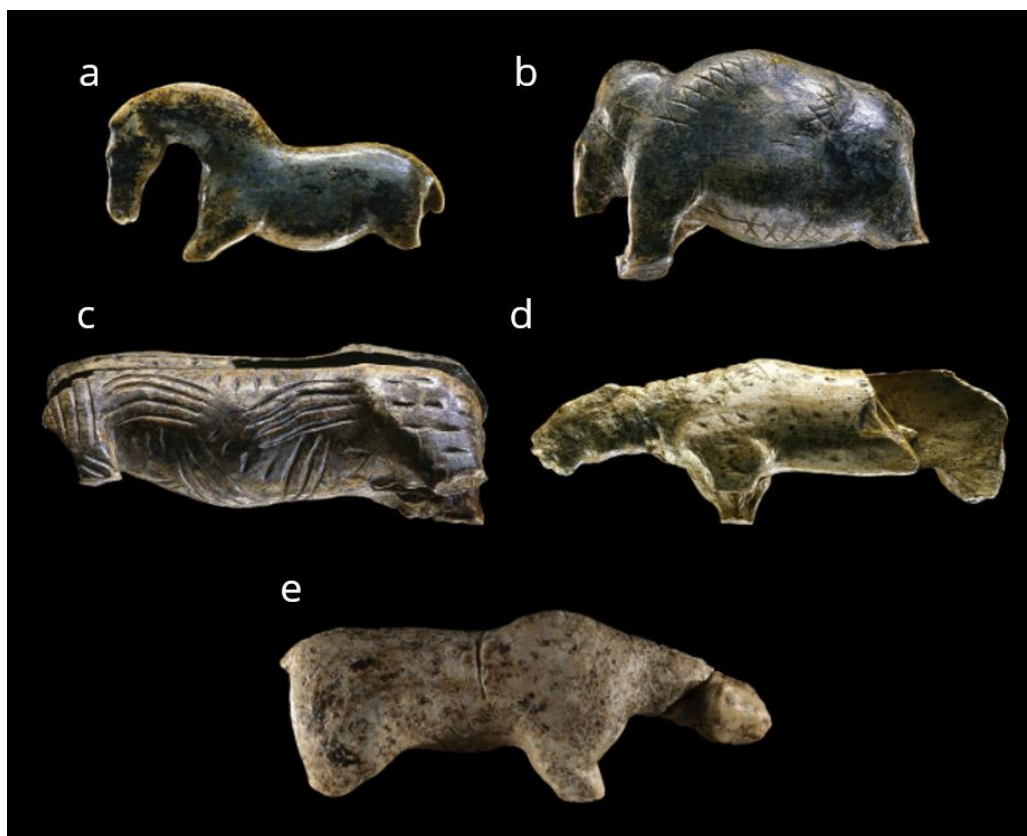


Figure 9.5: Five of the figurines from Vogelherd AH V: a) horse, b) mammoth, c) feline, d) feline, e) bear (or lion). Source: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018).

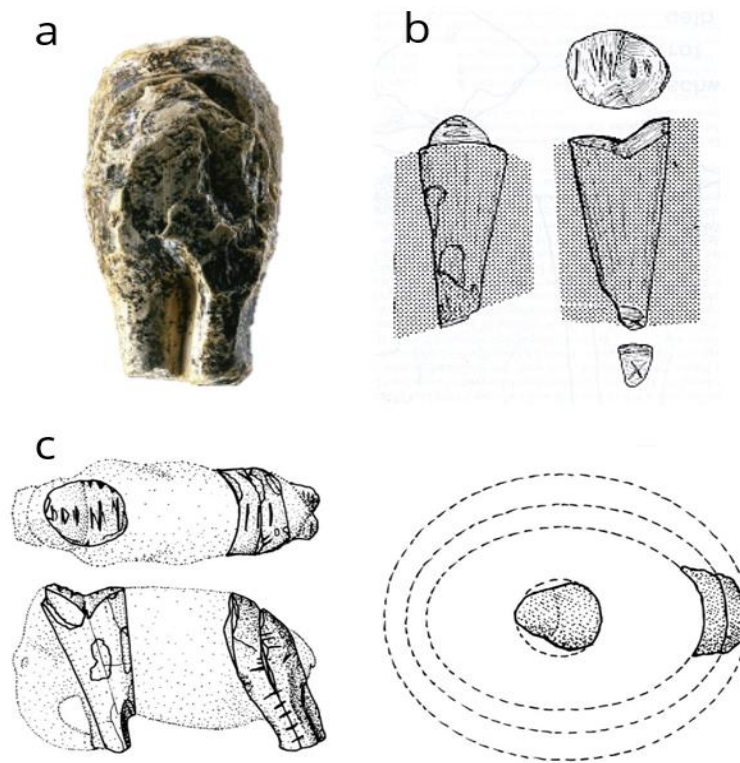


Figure 9.6: Two fragments from Vogelherd AH V, thought to comprise one figurine: a) mammoth rump, b) mammoth leg, c) reconstruction of how the two may have fitted together. Source: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018) and Urgeschichtliches Blaubeuren Museum.

miniature Lion-Man (Pettitt 2017). The antler piece (Figure 9.7a) is more unusual, consisting of a small bas-relief carving of a mammoth, carved onto antler that had been used as a retoucher.

Of the remaining 14 figurines, there are a huge number of different forms (Figure 9.8). There are another five mammoths, four felines, two fish, one bison, one hedgehog and one figurine of indeterminate form (Figure 9.8d) which I suspect is another feline based on its physical similarity to other feline figurines from the Swabian Jura. 14 of these figurines are ivory, with the one remaining figurine, purportedly representing a mammoth, being made of sandstone.

Vogelherd clearly has the most figurines of all the Swabian sites, and as such the assemblage here is one of incredible diversity, with animal and therianthropic figurines. The site was clearly one of great innovation and creativity during the Aurignacian, but the same can be said for all four sites considered here.

These sites were not all used in the same manner. Geißenklösterle was clearly some kind of settlement, and Hohle Fels was at the least a centre for butchery and ivory working, so could have been a base camp or production site. Hohlenstein-Stadel was apparently a unique and

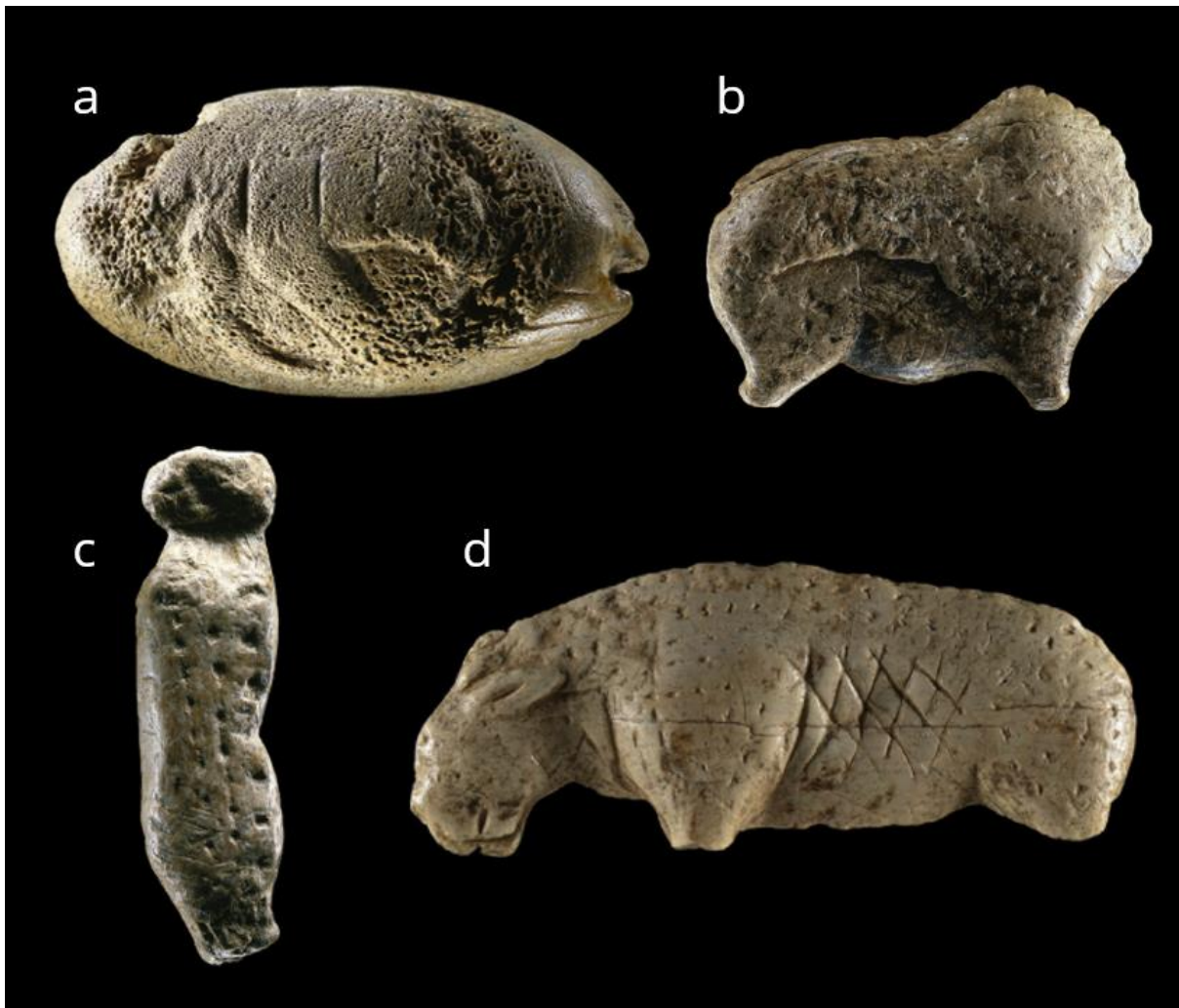


Figure 9.7: Four figurines from Vogelherd AH IV: a) relief of a mammoth, b) bison, c) potentially a miniature Lion-Man, d) cave lion. Source: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018).

significant site, used or kept for special occasions, whereas Vogelherd was the most intensively used of all four sites. Yet, despite their varying uses and material cultures, all four sites were home to truly remarkable material culture. Even so, what we see today likely represents only a small portion of the material culture of the time (Conard and Malina 2008, 14). We can only imagine the breadth of the original assemblage.

Overview of the Swabian figurines

Despite the often inhospitable nature of the Aurignacian climate, the people of the Swabian Jura produced a plethora of breathtaking symbolic artefacts. The significance of the symbolic material culture in this area is immense; some have called it one of the most important examples of Aurignacian art known to date (Igarashi and Floss 2019). As such, the Swabian Jura is of crucial importance for understanding the origin and development of both the

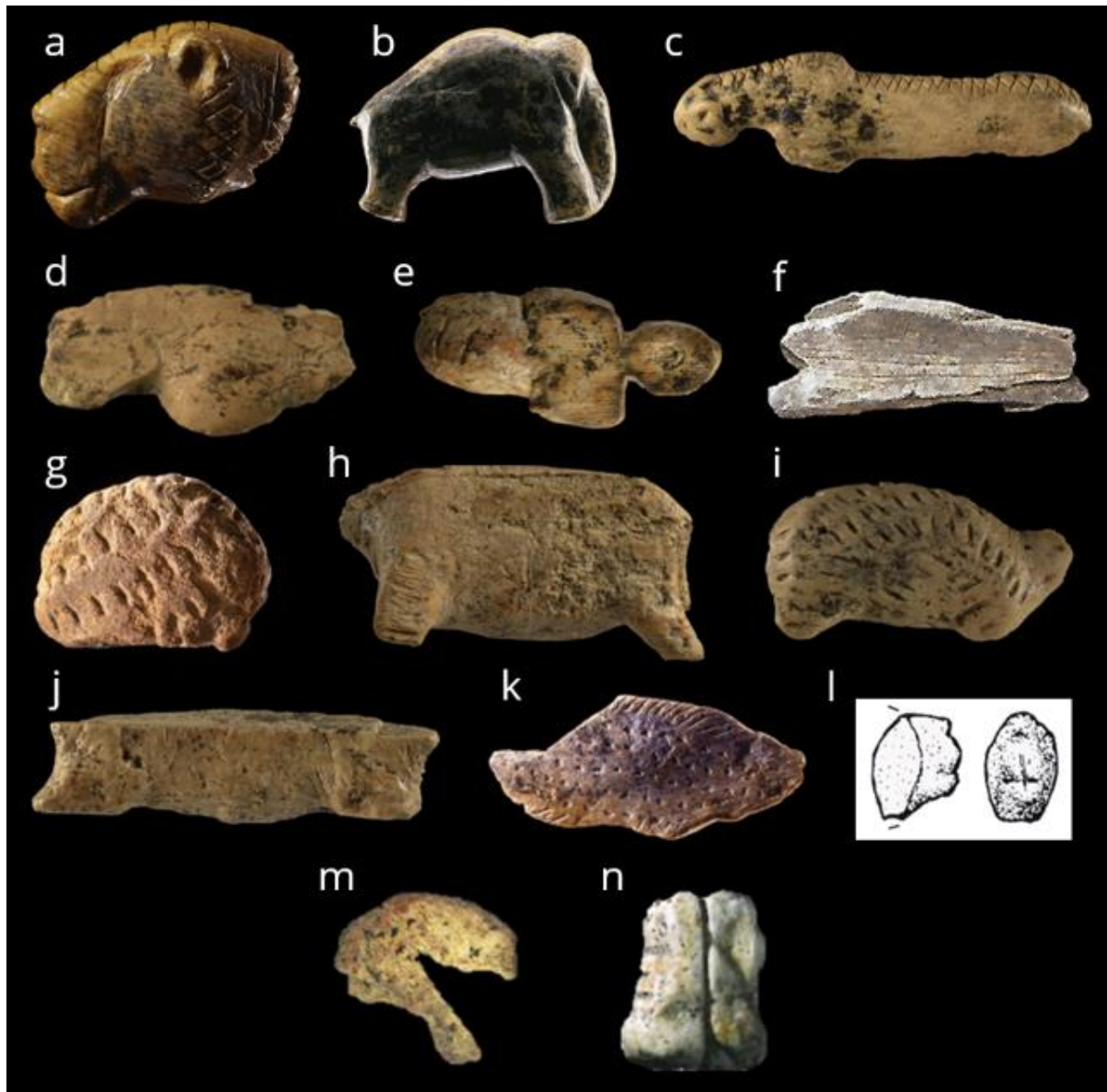


Figure 9.8: The fifteen figurines from Vogelherd for which we are unaware of the original location: a) lion's head, b) mammoth, c) cave lion, d) animal, perhaps a cave lion, e) mammoth cross-section, f) fish, g) potentially a mammoth, h) bovid or bison, i) hedgehog, j) animal body, likely a mammoth, k) fish, l) lion's snout, m) lion's head, n) mammoth's foot. Sources: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018) [a-e, h-j], Floss (2007) [f], Landesmuseum Württemberg (2020a) [g], Urgeschichtliches Blaubeuren Museum (2016a) [k], Urgeschichtliches Blaubeuren Museum (2016b) [l], Wolf (2015b, 199) [m], Conard (2018, 345) [n].

Aurignacian and early cultural and symbolic behaviours (Bataille and Conard 2018; Floss 2007, 295; Velliky, Porr and Conard 2018, 3). It is for these reasons that it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2017 (UNESCO 2017).

More than fifty pieces of mobiliary art have been uncovered at these four sites, although there are hundreds of unidentified fragments (Dutkiewicz et al. 2018) (Table 9.2), as well as artefacts with incised decorative motifs and even musical instruments (Floss 2018, 25). Most of these

	GK	HF	HS	VH
Figurines	5	11	1	78
Possible figurines	1	2	0	104

Table 9.2: The total quantities of figurines and possible figurines found at Geißenklösterle, Hohle Fels, Hohlenstein-Stadel and Vogelherd, up to 2017. Data from Dutkiewicz et al. (2018, fig.9).

pieces are broken or fragmentary, so the true number of figurines is unknown. Many, if not most, of the figurines listed within this chapter were reconstructed from dozens of fragments.

Within the small proportion of figurines which can be identified, there is incredible diversity. The figurines are largely *ronde-bosse* sculptures, with a small number of *bas-reliefs* (Floss 2014, 57). These figurines are varied in form; most are shaped like animals, but there are also a smaller number of therianthropes (hybrid beings) and humans (Floss 2015b, 319). Conard (2018) counts 33 recognisable representations, including nine mammoths, eight big cats/lions, three 'lion-people', two horses, two cattle/bison, two fish, two women, one water bird, a muskox, a bear, a hedgehog or hare-like animal, and an anthropomorphic figure. Most of these figurines represent animals that lived in the area at the time, though only half of the figurines are preserved well enough to make species identification possible (Museum Ulm 2019a). The majority of the figurines are small, measuring only a few centimetres tall, but with some exceptions: the famed 'Lion Man' figurine is by far the largest, measuring about 31cm tall. Most of the pieces are made of ivory, but a few pieces were made of bone or stone (Conard 2015, 8; Floss 2015b, 317). While ivory is rare today, it would have been a far more common material in the Upper Palaeolithic. The ivory at these sites seems to have been collected rather than hunted (Floss 2015b, 319; Wolf 2015a, 93). Ivory working appears to have been common or prominent during the Swabian Aurignacian. The ubiquity of ivory is no surprise; it is an excellent material for carving, having both strength and elasticity, as well as a visual and tactile appeal that cannot be achieved on materials like bone (Heckel 2009, 73, 89; Heckel and Wolf 2014, 2). Vogelherd is the only cave with evidence for the storing of tusks, but Vogelherd, Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels all show evidence of the manufacturing of tools and jewellery on site, Hohlenstein-Stadel being the exception (Münzel et al. 2017, 193). As well as figurines, ivory was used to craft tools and personal ornaments (Floss 2015b, 319), including the region's unique double-perforated beads (Figure 9.9). In contrast, the Swabian Middle Palaeolithic shows no evidence of ivory being used at all, while it was rarely used in the proceeding Gravettian period (Conard, Dippon and Goldberg 2003, 167; Dutkiewicz 2015, 80; Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 448; Kitagawa et al. 2012, 453; Münzel et al. 2017, 185).

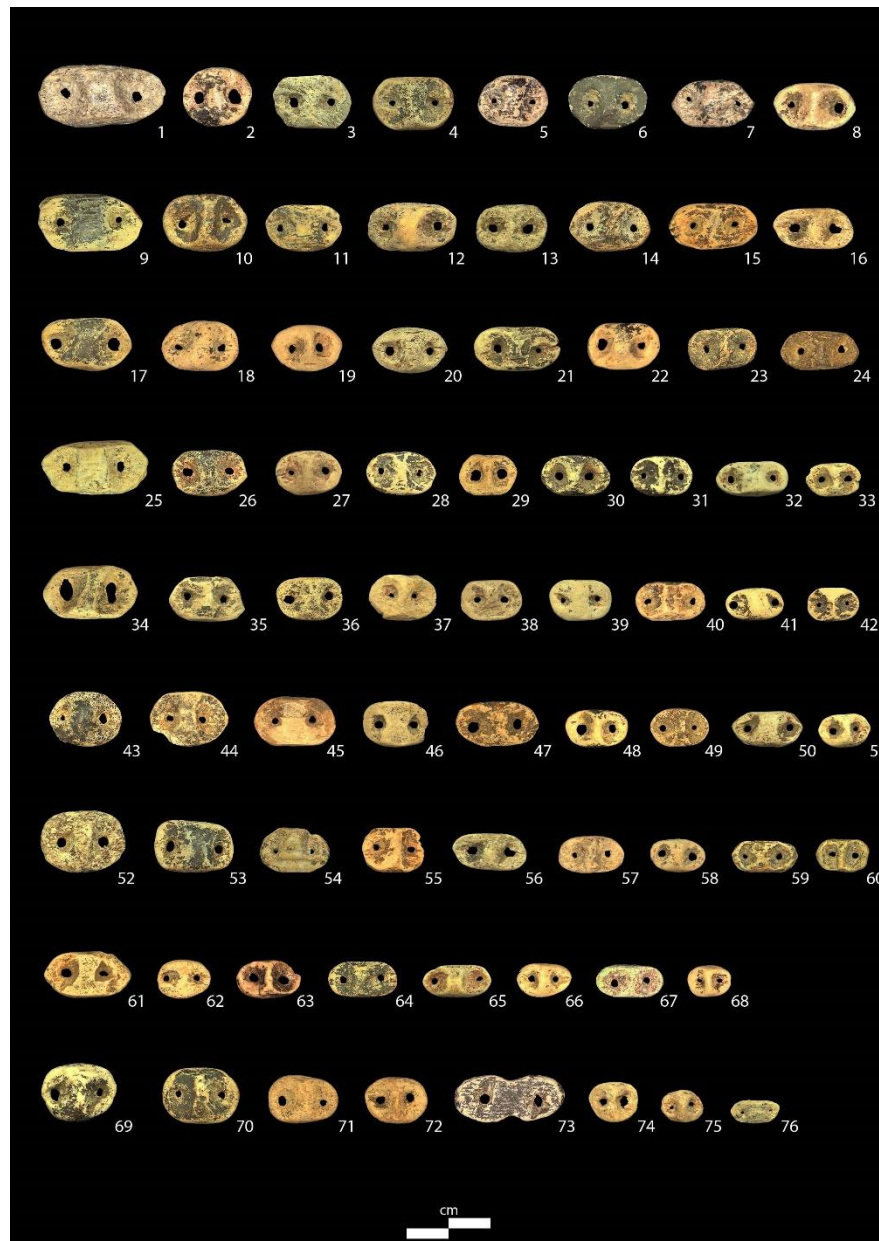


Figure 9.9: Double-perforated beads from the Swabian Jura. Source: Wolf (2015b, fig.45).

It is likely that only a small number of people had the artistic skills to create these items, with stylistic similarities suggesting a limited number of sculptors (Hahn 1993, 240; Hein 2018, 445). Some of the figurines are clearly more crudely carved than others; Hahn (1993, 236) saw this as representing both carefully planned figurines and more ad-hoc ones, but we might wonder whether this in fact represents less-skilled artisans attempting to carve their own figurines. Many of the figurines bear signs, markings or incisions: 29 out of 44 figurines studied by Ewa Dutkiewicz bore signs of some sort (Igarashi and Floss 2019, 202), although the exact meaning of these markings is lost to time.

The process of carving ivory figurines would have been a time-consuming process (Heckel 2009, 90), requiring both patience and skill. Wulf Hein estimated from his own carving experiments that the Vogelherd horse (Figure 9.5a), measuring less than 5cm at its widest, would have taken around 30 to 35 hours to create, while the Lion-Man would have taken closer to 360 hours (Hein 2018, 444; Museum Ulm 2019b). More detailed discussions of the process of figurine creation can be found elsewhere (Heckel 2009; Heckel and Wolf 2014; Heckel et al. 2016; Hein 2007, 2018; Reiche et al. 2018).

In this chapter, I will study a subset of Swabian Aurignacian figurative material culture, focusing specifically on those pieces which are clearly identifiable figurines of some sort. I will examine them as a corpus, considering the form and potential function of these objects, and whether they agree with the expectations outlined in the previous chapter. There has been a great deal of interest in these figurines and what significance they may have held, but as I will discuss, few of these interpretations adequately grapple with questions about their social and emotional significance. Thus far, archaeologists have not considered in any detail how the objects made and used by the people of the Swabian Aurignacian would have provided a significant source of socio-emotional support. It is time to rethink our interpretations. An approach based on the theory of attachment can provide fascinating new insights into the links between the social, emotional and material.

I chose to study a subset of the figurines, as opposed to all those outlined in Table 9.2, as some are so small and fragmentary that their original form and function cannot be determined. Instead, I have considered only those figurines which are clearly identifiable as such. For full details of all the figurines included in my discussion of this chapter, see Appendix 3. Floss (2007), Conard (2018) and Dutkiewicz et al. (2018) were the main sources of information for this data, and additional images and further discussion of many of the figurines can be found in both sources. I have based this Case Study on the 33 figurative representations that can clearly be identified as a particular form or species as listed by Conard (2018, 345) with the addition of two other fragmentary pieces which, while difficult to identify, I believe can be fairly clearly identified as animals of some sort (Figure 9.8d and 9.8g). Altogether, then, this leaves 35 figurative representations: five each from Geißenklösterle and Hohle Fels, one from Hohlenstein-Stadel and 24 from Vogelherd (Table 9.3). The choice here represents a compromise. I have kept my choice of objects fairly broad, but have left out most

	GK	HF	HS	VH
Number of figurines	5	5	1	24

Table 9.3: The figurines included in this Case Study.

of the fragmentary pieces, particularly those which have not been mentioned in more recent publications (i.e. within the last five years).

These figurative representations are wonderfully unique pieces, all the more fascinating given their antiquity. There are interesting questions to be raised as to what occurred in the Aurignacian to encourage the people of the Swabian Jura to create these objects. These figurative representations have no equal in the periods preceding or following, with figurative representations entirely absent in the Middle Palaeolithic and almost non-existent during the Gravettian and Magdalenian (Conard and Kieselbach 2006, 455). There is one Magdalenian figurine (Figure 9.10), made of a boar's tooth (Urgeschichtliches Museum Blaubeuren 2016d), but this is noticeably different in style to the naturalistic Aurignacian figurines. The lack of figurative representation is even more interesting when we consider that the Gravettian and Magdalenian layers of most of these sites yielded rich lithic and organic assemblages, including both tools and personal ornaments (Conard and Kieselbach 2006, 455; Velliky, Porr and Conard 2018, 3–4; Wong et al. 2020).



Figure 9.10: The Magdalenian figurine at Vogelherd, 13,000ka. Source: Parg (2015).

With other forms of material culture remaining present in the area throughout the Upper Palaeolithic, why then do figurines appear apparently suddenly in the Aurignacian before almost entirely disappearing in later periods? Why, in this one period, do we see such carefully carved figurines in such large quantities? What was it about the Aurignacian period that led the inhabitants of the Swabian Jura to create these unique, evocative figurines? And what significance did these figurines have?

Existing interpretations of the Swabian Aurignacian

Ever since figurines were first discovered in this region, archaeologists have been trying to answer such questions. There has been little agreement as to the meaning or significance of these objects, beyond the obvious point that these figurines *were* important. Existing interpretations have focused on two major areas: interpreting the figurines themselves, and incorporating them into wider arguments about why the Swabian Aurignacian was a place of such innovation. Though there have been many different interpretations of these figurines, and the context in which they were created, there is a lack of consideration as to how these objects would have made people feel, and how they shaped the thoughts and behaviours of those using them. Many of these interpretations, while interesting, assume that these figurines were passive vessels, rather than active socio-emotional beings.

Interpretations of the figurines

Zoomorphic figurines

Given that most of the figurines represent animals, interpretations of these figurines are by far the most varied and, I would argue, the most developed. As Porr (2010a, 97) has noted, if we take the various forms of these figurines (Figure 9.11) and place them in the context of the Swabian Aurignacian, it becomes clear that these figurines do not reflect the economic importance of the species represented, nor are they a representative sample of the region's faunal assemblage. Cave bears, for example, were remarkably common in the faunal record but there are only two depictions of these animals. Similarly, at Vogelherd one of the primary prey taxa was reindeer (Kitagawa et al. 2012, Table 2; Niven 2007, 365), but we have no depictions of these at all. Even considering the fact that we only have a small sample of the original total assemblage, we would expect to see more depictions of these animals in this sample if the art were intended as a representative sample of the fauna of the Swabian Jura.

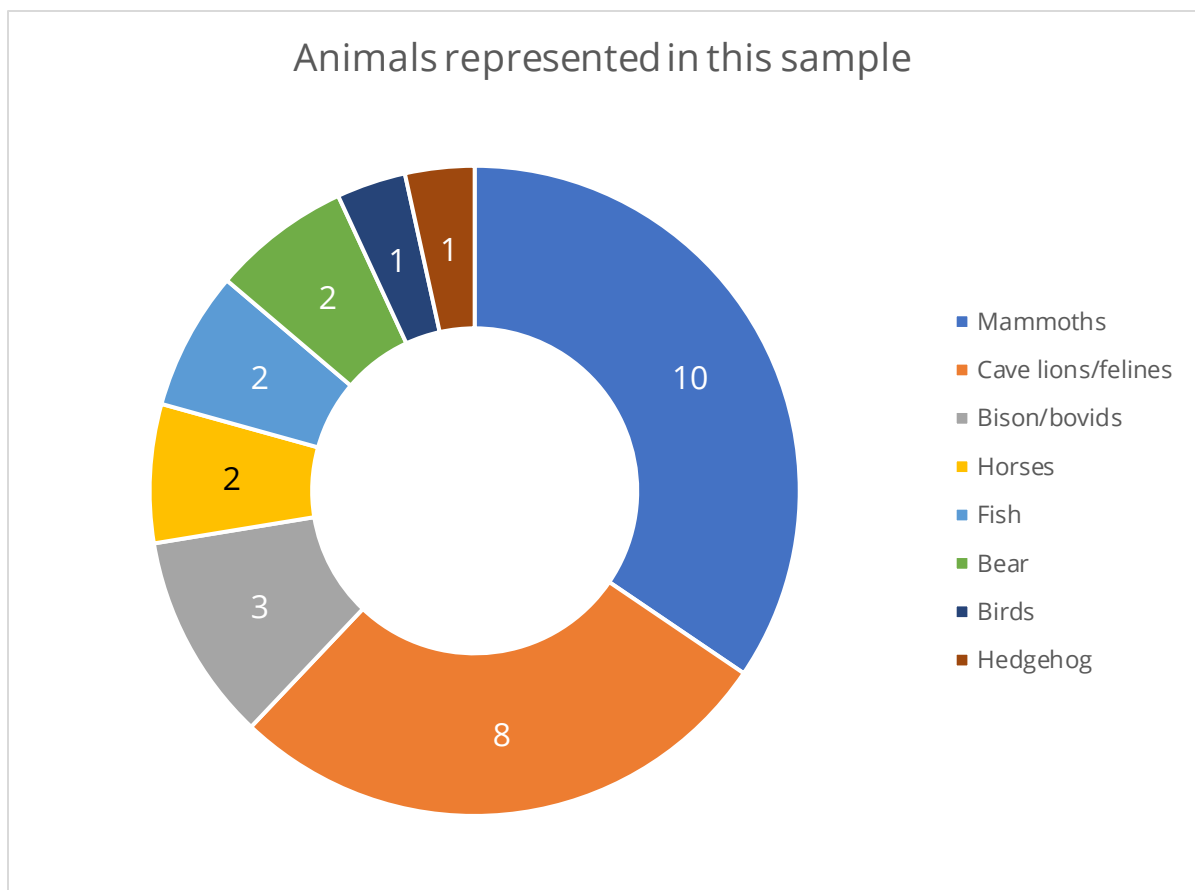


Figure 9.11: The frequency of different animal species represented in this sample. Note that human-lion therianthropes are not included in this graph; if they were, depictions of cave lions would be as high as 12.

There is clearly some other reason for the creation of these figurines. Most of these interpretations focus on what these animals may have *meant* to people, but unsurprisingly, many of these interpretations mirror the concerns and theoretical viewpoints of archaeology of the times in which they were written.

Gustav Riek, one of the first to excavate in the region in the 1930s, viewed the material culture at Vogelherd as simply representing the way of life and the preoccupations of Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers (Riek 1934, 296), an interpretation that, while true, tells us nothing about what these preoccupations might be. Half a century later Joachim Hahn, in charge of excavations in the Swabian Jura, focused on themes of power and aggression, arguing that the species represented at these sites were the most dangerous ones, perhaps used as teaching objects for hunters (Hahn 1986, 215). However, there are issues with this interpretation. More recent finds such as the waterbird (Figure 9.3) and hedgehog (Figure 9.8i) clearly do not represent predatory or dangerous animals, and if we look at many of the animal

figurines, they are not carved in positions suggesting power or aggression (Floss 2015b, 319, 2018, 25).

In line with changes in theoretical archaeology moving towards less dualistic approaches to the past, some archaeologists have reconsidered the appropriateness of the 'power and aggression' paradigm. Ethnographic evidence suggests that power and aggression are not the most appropriate framework through which to consider the human-animal relationship within the Palaeolithic. While it is easy to assume that the animal-human relationship is always a confrontational and competitive one, it is likely that this was not true (Porr 2010b). Conard (2003, 831) has argued that perhaps the people of the Swabian Jura admired these animals instead. Hussain and Floss (2015a, 46, 2015b), however, have criticised Western dualistic views of humans and animals. They note that, in ethnographic hunter-gatherer groups, humans and animals are seen to co-inhabit and share the landscape (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 46). If we think back to Chapter 7, Alaska Native nations view their relationship with animals, particularly the animals they hunt, not as combative but as cooperative. Hussain and Floss (2015b, 111) argue that the emergence of the Upper Palaeolithic saw a transformation in sociocultural organisation and a reframing of underlying ontologies, with the human-animal connection becoming more important. Thus, the populations of the Swabian Jura may not have seen these animals as aggressors or competitors but as an integral part of the world around them.

As an alternative to interpretations viewing these objects as a homogeneous group, some have considered the significance of particular animals. Specific animals may have relayed specific traits, with animal representations becoming part of a structured symbolic and metaphorical relationship as 'material mediators' between humans and animals (Hussain and Floss 2015b, 87; Porr 2010a, 98; Porr 2010b, 2015). Some researchers have focused on the behaviours of these animals, to better understand how humans might have conceived of them. Porr (2010a, 98) has outlined what he believes was a male-female distinction, with felines patrilineal and mammoths matrilineal. The female-mammoth link has also been posited by other researchers regarding the Upper Palaeolithic (for example, Iakovleva 2015).

Mammoths in particular appear to have been a significant species and were used for a variety of purposes throughout the European Upper Palaeolithic, not just in the Swabian Jura (Bosch 2012), and other researchers have argued for their symbolic significance at sites such as Dolní

Věstonice, Milovice, and Pavlov (Iakovleva 2015). Mammoths are intensely social creatures who would have been omnipresent within the landscape, living close to human camps, moving in large, visible herds, and leaving clear traces of their path behind them (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 48–49). Like elephants today, they would have had a palpable effect on the landscape, shaping the environment and providing raw materials for humans to use.

Hussain and Floss (2015a, 48) even argue that the inherently social behaviour of mammoths who, like elephants, clearly would have had their own personalities, may have led people to see them as social agents, breaking down the human-animal barrier. They link this to material culture, noting that the creation and wearing of such objects may have been used to further blur the boundaries between mammoths and humans, creating and recreating human-mammoth bonds (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 49). The use of mammoth ivory in a wide range of objects during the Swabian Aurignacian may have cemented this bond. The lack of butchery marks and presence of rotten ivory suggests that this material was collected, rather than hunted (Floss 2015b, 319; Hussain and Floss 2015a, 50; Wolf 2015, 93), and ivory caches suggest that it was a commonly used material at the time. Does this, combined with the frequency of mammoth depictions, suggest a significant relationship between humans and mammoths? Hussain and Floss (2015b) argue so. Cave lions, in contrast, are solitary, nocturnal creatures, potentially less visible and more alien to the humans living in this region, with a taskscape very separate from that of humans (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 51). While mammoths could have represented a regular, dependable force in the landscape, cave lions may have represented something more mysterious. Perhaps, then, these objects represent “the radical reorganisation of the sociocultural realm”, demonstrating and strengthening human-animal relationships (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 54).

There have been many discussions of the role of zoomorphic figurines in the Swabian Aurignacian. However, the literature largely appears to regard these animal figurines as passive reflections of inner thoughts or beliefs, as opposed to playing any active role. Porr and De Maria (2015, 301) have acknowledged that these objects are not just representations of worldviews, but “they are thoughts and are relationships that bind humans and animals to each other in a fundamental way”. These figurines may have constituted part of the human-animal relationships, solidifying and making material the links conferred by their animistic worldview. These figurines would have taken time and effort to make, and perhaps in doing

so, people socially and emotionally bound themselves to the animals within the landscape, or set themselves apart, in a direct, personal relationship.

The interpretations above, particularly those offered by Porr, De Maria, Hussain and Floss, potentially give us an inroad to understanding the symbolic significance of these objects, but there is no consideration of the *emotional* side of the social relationship that these people would have had with these animals. It is clear from the form of many of these figurines that the people of the Swabian Aurignacian knew these animals well, so well that they could carve lifelike representations out of a difficult raw material. Yet none of the above interpretations really gets to grips with the socio-emotional significance that such a connection elicits.

Therianthropic/hybrid figurines

Besides zoomorphic figurines, there are also a small number of therianthropic or hybrid figurines, all with a human-lion form. The most famous of these is the Hohlenstein-Stadel “Lion-Man” (Figure 9.4) but there are also two potential miniature “Lion-Men” (Figures 9.3c and 9.7c) at Hohle Fels and Vogelherd, as well as the ‘Adorant’ figurine from Geißenklösterle (Figure 9.2d), meaning that this form is found at all four sites.

Most researchers have interpreted these figurines as being indicative of shamanism, their spiritual system or worldview (Conard 2007a, 324; Conard 2015, 12; Conard 2019, 428; Cook 2017; Floss 2018, 24; Wehrberger 2007, 339, 344). The potential ambivalence of humans’ relationships with the apparently mysterious, nocturnal felines may have been represented in material culture depicting human-lion hybrids (Hussain and Floss 2015a, 2015b, 109).

Pettitt (2017, 857) has noted that hybrid figurines could be interpreted as individuals wearing masks or headdresses, such as those seen at the Mesolithic site of Star Carr, but given that the features of the Hohlenstein-Stadel Lion-Man are so clearly feline in the limbs as well as in the head, a true hybrid form seems more likely. As an aside, it is often assumed that this figurine represents a male-lion hybrid, though it must be said that the arguments for this are not always entirely convincing, based mainly on the assumption that the free-hanging crotch area represents stylised male genitalia. Perhaps the term ‘Lion-Person’ might be better suited (indeed, this would be a more appropriate translation of the original German name for the figurine, *Löwenmensch*).

The Hohlenstein-Stadel figurine has received far more attention than the smaller figurines. This is not surprising. There is clearly something particularly unusual about this larger figurine. It clearly had significance to those who made and used it, given that it appears to be the only figurine in the entire Swabian Jura to be given a specific depositional treatment, in comparison to other figurines which seem to have been part of the general detritus of daily life (Porr 2010a, 94; Porr 2010b, 455–456). Given that the smaller figurines do not appear to have received such treatment, even though they were of a similar form, this suggests that the larger figurine was particularly important. Surprisingly, the literature spends little time linking the Lion-Man of Hohlenstein-Stadel with the small figurines. It seems obvious that there is some connection between the two, perhaps that the smaller figurines were everyday reminders of the larger one.

Stannard and Langley (2021, 637) have suggested that the Lion-Man could have been an everyday children's plaything, but this was more of a speculative comment than a genuine interpretation. Furthermore, given that much of their paper focuses on small figurines as examples of children's material culture, it seems peculiar that they chose the largest figurine in the Swabian Jura as their example of a potential toy.

The main issue with most interpretations of the four hybrid figurines found in the Swabian Jura is that they are quite *dry*. They speak of religious belief, shamanism, or worldview without any mention of their social and emotive power. Religion and faith are evocative social and emotional experiences (indeed, religious figures and beliefs are commonly sources of attachment). As with the zoomorphic figurines, there is a pervasive assumption that these objects are a representation or reflection of beliefs, rather than an active participant.

Anthropomorphic figurines

Another unusual finding is the female figurine (or figurines) (Figure 9.3d and 9.3e). When the Hohle Fels female figurine (often referred to as a Venus, a term I will not use due to its racist origins) was first discovered, it received a great deal of media attention, viewed as titillating imagery, backed up by comments by archaeologists themselves who interpreted the figurine as an exaggerated female figure related to sex, reproduction or even pornography (Conard 2009). Mellars (2009, 176), for example, remarked upon the “explicitly, almost aggressively, sexual nature” of the figurine. This is a worryingly common interpretation with regards to Palaeolithic anthropomorphic figurines, but the popularity of overtly sexualised

interpretations has gradually waned, likely in response to criticism of the inappropriateness of such (Western) interpretations (Morriss-Kay 2012) and the acknowledgement that these types of figurines appear to represent obese, mature or pregnant women, rather than sexualised figures (Dixon and Dixon 2011; King 2013; McCoid and McDermott 1996; Stannard and Langley 2021).

More recently, interpretations of these figurines have become more nuanced and less provocative. Conard himself has arguably developed his views over time, noting in a 2018 paper that, as with the hybrid figurines, the Hohle Fels figurine may be linked to the belief systems of the period, particularly beliefs relating to femininity, sexuality, and human procreation (Conard 2018). These interpretations have linked the Hohle Fels figurine to other female depictions (which become much more common in the Gravettian), arguing that the female subject in Palaeolithic art may represent the role of women in the survival of the group and the creation of new life, represented or even induced through these depictions (Conard 2018).

Many of these interpretations lack sustained focus on the (non-sexual, emotional) feelings that this figurine might elicit. However, unlike both the zoomorphic and therianthropic figurines, this figurine has been interpreted with regards to the feelings that the objects might elicit. A paper by McCoid and McDermott (1996) famously considered whether female figurines in the Upper Palaeolithic represented women's (particularly pregnant women's) attempts at depicting themselves, although this paper does not mention the Hohle Fels figurine, having been published well over a decade before this figurine was discovered. Morriss-Kay (2012), however, has explicitly considered the Hohle Fels figurine in a similar manner, interpreting it as a self-portrait of a woman who has recently given birth, considering the exaggerated features of the figurine as representing the feelings that a woman experiences in the postpartum period. Morriss-Kay (2012, 1591) argues that these objects would have allowed the woman to regain possession of her body or come to terms with a stillbirth.

Over the last couple of years, there has been an overt focus on the comfort that may have been conferred by them. In a 2018 paper, I (Bell and Spikins 2018, 33) considered how the Hohle Fels figurine, being small, portable, and well-handled, might have provided a visual reminder of another, or provided comfort and security to the wearer. As part of an

experimental project, Stannard and Langley (2021) made replicas of the figurine with heads made from organic material and some dressed in furs, and asked students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous elders, mentors, and staff to handle them. As the authors noted (Stannard and Langley 2021, 30):

“One woman stated that, on being passed the figurine and feeling the warmth of the fur, she found that it provoked a maternal and nurturing response for which she was unprepared. This spontaneous observation would appear to support the written ethnographic record regarding the power of dolls to elicit sometimes strong responses in their human users.”

The female figurine(s) at Hohle Fels are, then, unique, with more than one paper describing the feelings that might be elicited by these objects. This is promising, as it demonstrates an interest in the active, emotional role of these objects. Why the female figurine is the only one in the Swabian Jura which has been interpreted in such a way, is difficult to say, though I suspect that it may simply be because the form of this figurine is more familiar to us today, and the feelings associated with it are thus considered easier to identify (whether or not this is true).

There are other questions to be considered. The Hohle Fels figurine shares morphological similarities with figurines from the Gravettian, yet clearly appears in the archaeological record far earlier, and in apparent isolation. At the most, the figurine has a twin in the same site (Figure 9.3e), but this brings up even more questions. What is it about this period and this place which caused the need for such an unusual figurine(s), thousands of years before any other? While promising work has been undertaken, further interpretations of the Hohle Fels figurine(s) need to more deeply consider the contextual factors which might explain the factors behind its creation.

Social and communicative role

So far, I have discussed these figurines in three broad categories: zoomorphic, therianthropic or hybrid and anthropomorphic. However, in this section I will once again consider the figurines as a corpus, as this allows us to deal with some of the contextual factors mentioned at the end of the previous section. It also allows us to begin to consider the questions posed earlier in this chapter, namely: why do these objects appear so suddenly in this specific time and place, in such a developed form?

One of the most convincing arguments relates to the use of these objects as social and communicative objects. The Swabian Aurignacian was marked by increasingly intensive human settlement, and this growth in human presence may have prompted interaction and social networks along the Danube, or even seasonal aggregations, perhaps leading to cultural innovations (Niven 2007, 378).

There are questions regarding why these objects are so varied, compared to the more standardised symbolic culture of the Gravettian. The mobiliary art of this area has a strong regional signature, albeit with similarities to other European Aurignacian sites, such as the occurrence of human and hybrid figurines (Floss 2018, 27). An answer may come from the demographic and social makeup of the Swabian Aurignacian, which had smaller and more flexible social groups than the Gravettian and was thus more conducive to individualised expression (Velliky, Porr and Conard 2018, 24). The change in material culture here may represent social change extensive enough to alter material culture or encourage innovation, particularly in their figurative material culture, while being low-level enough to allow the inhabitants to maintain a distinct regional style.

Porr interprets the uniqueness of these figurines in another way. He argues that, considering both the individual character of the statuettes and the effort invested in making them, the Swabian figurines acquired and possessed their significance in close relationships with individual persons and while being materially attached to specific individuals (Porr 2010b, 4). The loss of this connection (through being thrown away) thus caused them to lose their cultural significance too (Porr 2010b, 4). This is an interesting perspective, and one that takes into account the confusing depositional context of many of the figurines, which appear to have been discarded with no thought at all.

However, the majority of social interpretations view these figurines explicitly as a way of cementing social relationships and connections, either by creating and maintaining a shared group identity or by making material a shared cultural memory (Conard 2015, 12; Wolf 2015a, 92). The many kinds of symbolic material culture found at these sites may all have shared this purpose. Conard (2011, 236), for example, has argued that figurative material culture and musical instruments may have acted as means of maintaining larger and more complex social networks. Cook (2017), too, has noted that these objects may have strengthened common social bonds over time. Porr (2010a, 102–103) notes that these objects “provide a solution to

the problem of integrating structures and themes of cultural memory into everyday life” under conditions of high social flexibility and mobility. Perhaps, then, these objects provided a powerful means of social and mnemonic communication, whether within or between groups, although the individual character noted by Porr could also fit in here. These objects may have been both social and individual, denoting one’s identity or connections to others simultaneously.

These objects may have helped in expanding and solidifying ever more complex social networks at the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic (Conard 2011, 236). While the Neanderthals of the preceding Middle Palaeolithic kept in small, largely closed social groups maintaining social connections through direct personal interactions (Conard, Bolus and Münzel 2012, 244), modern humans lived in larger groups, sustained by the use of objects.

Social interpretations of these figurines are thus more active, acknowledging the role of these objects in conveying identity, memory, and social connection. However, there is still a lack of engagement with the emotional side of social life. Porr’s ideas about individuality and cultural memory are particularly interesting but ignore the emotional ramifications of such objects. Cultural memory is a powerful socio-emotional force, bringing people together through a shared cultural, symbolic, and emotional bond. At this point in this thesis, there should be no doubt that our social relationships are intensely emotional, and if we are to consider the social role of these objects, we must also consider their emotional impact.

Physical form of the objects

Many of the interpretations outlined thus far speak of the intangible significance of these objects, but clearly the physicality of these objects is important too. What might these figurines tell us through their physical form?

Many of the figurines outlined here are covered in various markings (for examples, see Figure 9.12). Recently several researchers, particularly Ewa Dutkiewicz, have begun to consider these markings, present on many objects in the Swabian Jura, but particularly prevalent among the figurines (Dutkiewicz and Conard 2016, 157; Dutkiewicz et al. 2020).

There are two main ways to interpret these markings: as simple representations of the physical form of the beings represented, or as some form of symbolism. There are clearly a few figurines for which this first interpretation is adequate. If we look at, for example, the



Figure 9.12: Examples of the kinds of markings visible on the Swabian figurines. Source: Ewa Dutkiewicz.

hedgehog (Figure 9.13a) and one of the fish figurines from Vogelherd (Figure 9.13b), the engravings clearly represent the form of the original subject. In the case of the majority of the marked animal figurines, however, the markings do not seem to represent fur, feathers or anatomical realities, and there is no apparent relationship between the type of marking and the type of animal. The markings themselves are generally geometric patterns with no relationship to realistic animal markings (Floss and Conard 2010, 206–207; Hahn 1993, 233; Igarashi and Floss 2019, 201). There are yet other figurines which appear to have no markings whatsoever. Thus, even within this small body of figurines, there is a great deal of variability, making interpretation difficult.

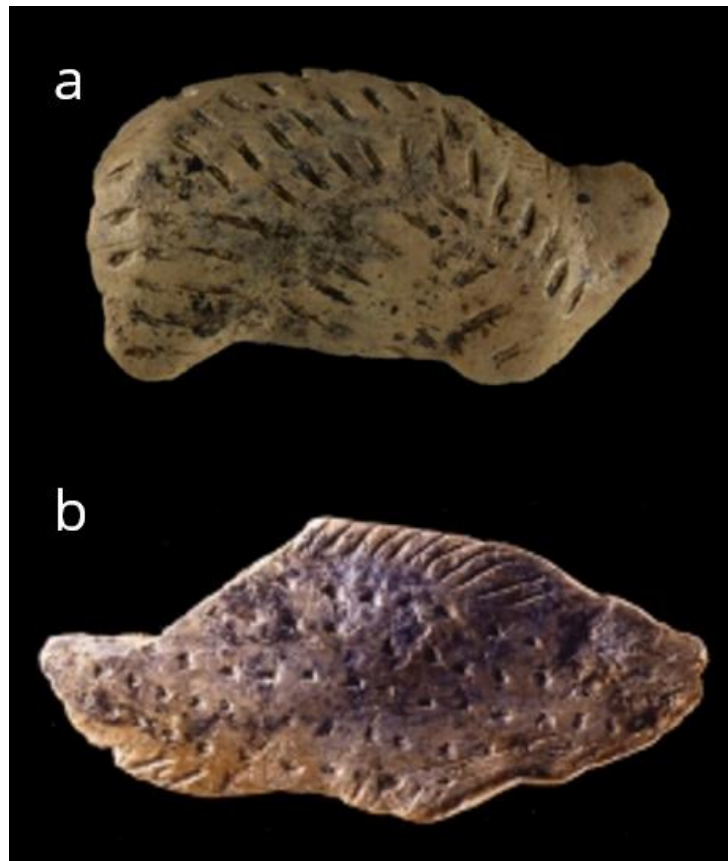


Figure 9.13: Examples of realistic markings visible on the Swabian figurines.
Source: Ewa Dutkiewicz and Urgeschichtes Museum Blaubeuren.

This has not deterred archaeologists, however, though unsurprisingly their interpretations are often a reflection of the time in which they were written. Early interpretations revolved around the idea of ‘art for art’s sake’, as signatures of the artists, or as simplified drawings of real objects (Dutkiewicz and Conard 2016, 154). These interpretations saw little deeper meanings in any Palaeolithic art. Marshack, on the other hand, viewed the markings as the ‘repeated use and ritual killing’ of these objects (Hahn 1993, 233). However, if this were true, we might expect the marked objects to have been deposited in a different way from unmarked objects, which is not the case.

Others have attempted to seek out the meaning behind these figurines, whether through Leroi-Gourhan’s attempts to group the markings into female and male (the male-female dichotomy being popular within interpretations of these objects), or as a representation of notational systems or calendars (Dutkiewicz and Conard 2016, 154–155). Dutkiewicz has performed the most detailed studies of the markings to date, and believes they are somehow related to the religion or mythology of the time. She reminds us that these markings are not unique to the figurines themselves, and that there are also temporal differences in specific

markings (Dutkiewicz, Wolf and Conard 2018, 42). However, she notes that we will never know the true meaning of these markings, though they demonstrate at the least that the people living here had a complex symbolic, mnemonic system (Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 464).

Besides the markings, other physical elements of the Swabian figurines have also received attention. The portability of these objects is often noted; these were clearly mobile objects used by mobile people (Floss 2015a, 324; Wolf 2015a, 96). Most of the figurines were small enough to be carried around regularly. Some were pierced, perhaps to make them more easily wearable, while yet others show signs of polish from repeated or long-term use. These objects were clearly carried, attached to clothing, or handed for long periods of time (Floss 2018, 27; Floss and Conard 2010, 207; Porr 2010b). These items had tactile significance, as most gained polish through use, rather than being polished during production (Floss and Conard 2010, 207).

Besides the physical form of the objects themselves, there are also questions surrounding the physical placement of the figurines. Some of the figurines were found close to musical instruments, and questions have been raised over whether the two were linked in some way (Conard, Malina and Münzel 2009, 740; Floss 2015a, 326).

While these objects are often grouped together, if we take more than a cursory glance at them it becomes clear that there is a great deal of variability among them. In their form, particularly in the markings, we can see that some appear to reflect the form of the animal, others are geometric patterns with some unknown meaning, while others remain unmarked. Some were perforated, some were highly polished, others were not. This variation may be confusing and frustrating, but the physical form of these objects is clearly a significant factor to be considered when interpreting them. It also reminds us not to oversimplify them, giving them blanket interpretations.

From earlier utilitarian explanations to more recent symbolic interpretations, the Swabian figurines have been the subject of interpretation and reinterpretation over many decades. As Conard (2008, 42; 2018, 344) has noted, it is extremely unlikely that all these figurines held the same meaning. This should come as no surprise, as if we look back to the psychological and ethnoarchaeological research undertaken in this thesis, it becomes clear that even figurines which are similar in form can have very different meanings.

Explanations for the innovations of the Swabian Aurignacian

These figurines have been explored not just in their own right, but also incorporated into broader arguments regarding the unique innovations of the Swabian Aurignacian. Archaeologists have become increasingly interested not just in what the figurines themselves signify, but also what they can tell us about life at the time. Why, *in this specific time and place*, do we see such clear evidence for innovation in material culture, which we do not see to the same extent before or after?

The Swabian Aurignacian as a whole appears suddenly, in a highly developed, regionally specific form, suggesting that it was developed in this area, rather than brought in from elsewhere (Conard and Bolus 2006, 220). The material culture of the Swabian Jura appears to have changed so rapidly at the beginning of the Aurignacian that Floss (2018, 28) has described it as “a veritable ‘creative explosion’ or ‘cultural big bang’”. There is increasing interest in the sociocultural factors that led people to invest so much time, energy, and resources in making these objects (Floss 2018, 24–25). Even the smaller pieces may have taken a full day to carve (Hein 2018), which strongly suggests that these were culturally significant in some way (Heckel 2009, 90). Once these innovations had arisen, they were retained throughout the Aurignacian period of this region, with the same forms and themes apparently retained in both personal ornaments and figurines (Wolf and Heckel 2018, 365).

The Swabian Jura is an unusually early example of the material changes characteristic of the Aurignacian. As such, this region has been subject of numerous models attempting to explain its origins. Two interconnected models proposed by researchers are the Population Vacuum (or Danube Corridor) model and the Kulturpumpe model. The Population Vacuum model argues that AMHs arrived in the then-depopulated Swabian Jura during or immediately after an unfavourable climatic phase, perhaps Heinrich Event 4 (Conard and Bolus 2006, 211), probably occurring as a rapid migration through the Danube Corridor around 45,000 years ago (Bolus 2015a, 32; Dutkiewicz, Wolf and Conard 2018, 32).

The Kulturpumpe (literally ‘Culture Pump’) model in turn argues that the Swabian Jura then acted as the place from which novel behavioural developments began and spread to other parts of Europe (Higham et al. 2012). This latter model in its original form argues that inter-taxa competition, climatic stress, and internal sociocultural factors, particularly higher

population density, were the impetus behind the Swabian innovations (Conard and Bolus 2006, 225).

There has been speculation as to whether contact between Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* may have encouraged innovation (Conard and Malina 2008, 17), though the sites themselves cast doubt on this as there is a clear sterile layer between Neanderthal and *Homo sapiens* occupations. More recently, research has focused instead on the role of the challenging Aurignacian environment and cooling climate as a potential driver of this change (Rhodes, Starkovich and Conard 2019, 33). Climate fluctuations during this period were frequent, and this could have had big impacts on regional flora and fauna as well as on human subsistence behaviours (Riehl et al. 2015, 151).

The big question here is whether these innovations conferred an advantage for the people of the Swabian Aurignacian. This period saw changing social and economic conditions, with improved nutrition, and increased birth and survival rates compared to the Middle Palaeolithic (Conard 2015, 11). Conard (2007b, 362; 2018) believes that perhaps modern humans were better able to innovate than Neanderthals, arguing that technological and symbolic innovations clearly contributed some kind of demographic advantage on the part of *Homo sapiens* in the Swabian Jura. However, it is important to note here that, in the case of the Middle Palaeolithic, we know that Neanderthals spent less time here, sharing the caves with bears, so the lack of evidence for such innovation is not necessarily evidence that it never existed. When we consider recent findings of Neanderthal art (Pitarch Martí et al. 2021), it becomes clear that Neanderthals were capable of artistic innovation, if not in this region.

Trying to pin down the reasons behind change is always difficult, not least because many of the causal factors are interconnected. At present, sociocultural factors, such as demographic change, and climate-related factors appear to be the most favoured explanations. This suggests that the roots of innovation in the Swabian Jura were the result of intragroup factors unique to Swabian AMHs, rather than the result of competition. As ever, context is integral when trying to interpret these figurines

One issue with these explanations, as ever, is the lack of consideration or reference to the active social and emotional role that these objects may have played. They appear to be widely regarded as either the cause or the result of innovations, but are rarely attributed any active role in this, let alone an active social and emotional role.

An attachment perspective on the Swabian Jura

The need for a reconsideration of the social and emotional significance of these objects has been mentioned within this chapter again and again, and may seem a repetitive point, but this is a noteworthy issue. These objects were clearly significant and mark out the Swabian Jura as an area of innovation. Considerable time was given over to creating them, and a large number were created, suggesting a substantial time investment. In reality, there were likely an even larger number of figurines than we currently know of, given the hundreds of fragments found at these four sites. Given the time, energy, and resource investment, it seems unlikely that such objects had no socio-emotional importance.

Archaeologists have considered the sociocultural factors which encouraged the creation and use of these objects but have not considered the sociocultural effects that they had. There has been little consideration of how these objects would have made people feel, how people might have emotionally related to them, or how they may have cemented socio-emotional bonds. This is a major oversight. We cannot talk about what these objects meant to people without also considering their socio-emotional weight, because this is a huge part of what meaning is.

It is here, then, that an attachment perspective may provide new insights into the material evidence and its socio-emotional significance. In this section, I will reconsider the evidence and interpretations outlined above through the lens of attachment, by comparing the general patterns of material evidence against the expectations outlined in the previous chapter.

These expectations outlined that, in societies undergoing times of great stress, uncertainty, or insecurity, we might expect to see four major changes in the archaeological record which reflect an increased need for compensatory attachment figures:

- Increased diversification of material culture
- Proliferation of portable objects
- Increasingly worn objects
- Objects moving longer distances.

The Swabian Jura provides an interesting case study, as the Aurignacian period in this region was one of great change. It saw the arrival of a new group of humans in this region, likely moving into Europe across the Danube Corridor. They would have had to cope with a new

environment and a cooling climate, leading them to use cave sites during the coldest periods of the year. Socially, they may have encountered entirely new groups of people, but these connections may have been cut off during the harshest months of the year. Yet despite these insecurities, innovative material culture, both technological and symbolic, flourished.

Increased diversification of material culture

In the previous chapter, I noted that *'we would likely see a diversification in the form of material culture in any given assemblage, with an increase in objects without a clear palaeoeconomic function'*. This is clearly mirrored in the Swabian Jura. We see a large number of new objects during the Aurignacian, particularly figurines but also musical instruments.

There is diversity in form, with a range of human, animal, and hybrid subjects, and among the numerous animal subjects, there is more diversity still, with at least eight or nine different species, likely more in the original assemblage. If we break this down by site, we can see that there is variation in form at Geissenklösterle, Hohle Fels and Vogelherd (Table 9.4). Furthermore, while at Hohlenstein-Stadel there is only one figurine, the Lion-Man, but this figurine is remarkably unique, too.

As found in the psychological studies in Chapter 5, while these objects come in a range of forms, there appear to be some cultural trends, particularly in the prevalence of certain animal species. Mammoths and cave lions are the most common ($n = 18$), though almost 40% of the animal figurines ($n = 11$) are other species. The vast majority of mammoth and feline figurines were found at Vogelherd ($n = 16/18$, 88%), unsurprising given that it is the most intensively used site, although 37.4% of the figurines had other forms ($n = 9/24$). It is difficult to draw specific conclusions as to the significance of these trends due to the small size of the sample, but what we see from Table 9.4 is a pattern of clear diversity, combined with underlying trends.

Not only is there diversity in subject, however: there is also diversity of style, form, and ability. If we look at the various animals, particularly the mammoths and felines, there are similarities in form but with clear differences of style. Such are the stylistic differences that it has been difficult for archaeologists to determine the identity of many of these figurines. Similarly, as has been discussed here already, the markings on these objects are also diverse and leave no clear pattern, suggesting a unique significance to each object. Some figurines are clearly more well-executed than others, too, suggesting a diversity of either significance or skill.

	Ach Valley		Lone Valley	
	Geißenklösterle	Hohle Fels	Hohlenstein-Stadel	Vogelherd
Mammoth	2			8
Feline				8
Bovid	1			2
Bear	1			1
Horse		1		1
Fish				2
Waterfowl		1		
Hedgehog				1
Human/ anthropomorphic		2		
Hybrid/ therianthropic	1	1	1	1

Table 9.4: Breakdown of figurines by form (and, in the case of zoomorphic figurines, by species).

There is a certain degree of variation in material, with most of the figurines made from ivory, but with two carvings made from antler and sandstone respectively. Again, these occur at Vogelherd, which is unsurprising; the largest site with the most extensive material culture would likely have had the most variation. These small objects may reflect more unique, personal objects made from unusual materials, or perhaps objects made with what was available at the time. Yet, overall, the diversity appears to be more about what the objects looked like, rather than the material from which they were carved. This may also simply reflect the materials available, or most convenient, for carving.

In the previous chapter I also noted that we might expect to see an increase in unusual objects, such as objects which do not appear to ‘fit in’ or appear ‘out of place’. These objects are not unusual for the site, perhaps, but they are undeniably unusual for the Aurignacian period, showing a skill, diversity, and ubiquity unparalleled anywhere else in the world at this time. As predicted, many of the objects in this region have previously been interpreted as having some kind of symbolic or ritualistic significance, given they lack a clear palaeoeconomic function. This first expectation, then, appears to hold up for the Swabian Aurignacian, with a huge change in material culture in this period and place.

Proliferation of portable objects

Chapter 8 also stated that we would expect to see a proliferation of portable objects which could be worn, held, or carried for long periods of time. The fragmentary nature of many of these figurines (and the lack of published dimensions) can make it difficult to tell their original size, but the vast majority of Swabian figurines were small. The exceptions are the

Hohlenstein-Stadel Lion-Man, which is 31cm tall, a horse's head from Hohle Fels thought to have likely been part of a larger figurine of around 30cm, and the fragment of an unknown animal from Vogelherd thought to have been part of a larger sculpture. These figurines are unusually large for this region, as every other figurine is 10cm or smaller at its greatest dimension. Indeed, many of the figurines are considerably smaller than this, with more than a dozen being smaller than 5cm at their widest point. Many could have been carried around in the hand or in a bag or pocket. Given their size, it would have been wise to do so, as many are so small, they would be easily lost.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the larger figurines, but the Lion-Man is an unusual piece and appears to be a special item related to the belief system practiced in this region. The horse's head and unknown animal are more difficult to explain, but these are unusual pieces for these sites and so may be unique items, different in significance from the others. A 30cm horse figurine would not have been easy to move around or carry with oneself. That said, it is not entirely sure that this would have been a larger figurine. In this case, the horse head may have been carved without the body, reminiscent of the Panel of Horses at Chauvet which does not show the full body of horses, instead focusing on the head and neck (Figure 9.14).



Figure 9.14: The Panel of Horses in Chauvet Cave, France. Source: Thomas T. (2010).

I noted in the previous chapter that it would be useful to consider the ways in which objects were modified to aid their portability. There are some interesting potential examples in the Swabian Jura (Figure 9.15). Several figurines have holes or loops, suggesting that they were pendants. The most famous of these is the female figurine at Hohle Fels (Figure 9.3d), which has a suspension loop instead of a head. What this lack of a head means is unclear. Porr (2010b) has argued that this figurine may have represented an abstract ideology as opposed to a representation of a particular person (and many of the later Gravettian figurines lack a head). There may originally have been a head which then broke off, which as Stannard and Langley (2021) have noted may explain why the loop is off-centre. Yet, whatever its interpretation, this figurine clearly has a loop to allow for suspension, as well as polish on the loop, showing that it was used for its intended purpose. It is interesting, too, that this figurine is one of the few that was clearly made to be hung, suggesting it could have been kept close to someone, as this is also not the most artistically skilled figurine, with Conard (2018) noting that this figurine is less elegant than many of the animal figurines. Altogether, this is an unusual piece, clearly made to be worn, perhaps around the neck, and its unusual form and lack of elegance may perhaps suggest that it was made by someone with a little less skill in carving than the creators of many of the animal figurines. We might wonder here whether



Figure 9.15: The six figurines which have clear evidence of perforations, and which have thus been interpreted as pendants. Sources: Dutkiewicz et al. (2018), Landesmuseum Württemberg (2020a).

this object represents a more personal object, a unique item made by one person for another or even to wear themselves.

There are also several other figurines which appear to have been carved purposefully to be carried or worn. At Vogelherd, five figurines have been interpreted as pendants in some form. There is little pattern to these objects: no particular subject, material or form appears to be most commonly used as a pendant. Interestingly, the only two figurines not made of ivory were both perforated. The antler bas-relief of a mammoth from horizon IV has a broken eyelet on one side, suggesting that it was used as a pendant, and the sandstone *ronde-bosse*, also of a mammoth (provenance unknown), has an eyelet on the underside. Both would have been portable and able to be attached to clothing or around the neck (Hahn 1993, 236; Landesmuseum Württemberg 2020a). In the earlier horizon V, there are three animal figurines, representing a horse, mammoth and feline, which all share a similar type of perforation. In all figurines, the front and back legs are each brought together, with a hole carved between the two front and two back legs.

While we cannot be sure with any certainty that these are pendants – indeed, the mammoth shows no traces of wear between the legs (Urgeschichtliches Museum Blaubeuren 2016b) – there is no convincing alternative explanation for why these holes were carved. Other authors seem inclined to believe that these objects were pendants, or at the least easily portable (Conard 2008; Hahn 1993, 236; Landesmuseum Württemberg 2020a) and I would agree with this. In the case of the Vogelherd horse, ten of the 30 to 40 hours needed to create the figurine would have been spent piercing the holes between the fore and hind limbs (Hahn 1993), a considerable amount of time, especially considering that it would have been simpler to carve out the legs separately. This was done on at least three separate occasions, as evidenced by the horse, mammoth and feline figurines seen here, and I am not inclined to attribute this to a purely stylistic choice. All three of the figurines share little in common stylistically apart from the carving of the legs, so it seems that this was a functional choice, as opposed to an aesthetic one.

It is interesting that three of the most unusual pieces in the Swabian Jura (the two non-ivory pieces as well as the Hohle Fels female figurine) are perforated. This suggests, to me at least, that these perforated objects were unique or particularly important in some way (perhaps before becoming more popular or more common in the later Aurignacian, as we can see from

the three perforated figurines found in VH layer V). Perhaps these more unique and unusual pieces were more individual, more meaningful to one person, which may account for why they are perforated, as if they were meant to be kept close.

Yet simply because other objects were not perforated, it does not follow that they were not portable. We do not know what clothes or bags the people of the Swabian Aurignacian used, so others may have been attached, carried, or held in a pocket. The small size of the majority makes it likely that they were intended to be portable. Again, the most glaring exception to this is the Hohlenstein-Stadel Lion-Man, which at 31cm tall would have been neither easy to carry, nor wearable. Given its unique location, subject and size, it is likely that the Lion-Man was meant to be left in Hohlenstein-Stadel, perhaps as a religious or spiritual offering or representation.

The Swabian Aurignacian was home to a large number of portable objects. Judging the reasons for an increase in portable material culture is difficult with regards to the Palaeolithic as, being mobile people, most material culture during the Palaeolithic had to be portable, too. Yet, objects like the Hohlenstein-Stadel Lion-Man show that the people here did occasionally choose to create larger objects, but these appear to be for very specific functions. The vast majority of these figurines were small and altered so that they could be carried or worn, and it appears likely that this was a conscious choice.

Increasingly worn objects

The third expectation noted in the previous chapter was that we would expect to see an increase in particularly worn objects in the archaeological record, resulting from repeated use or touch. As noted in Chapter 8, it can be difficult to tell apart different patterns of wear, further complicated by the fragmentary nature of many of the figurines.

However, previous researchers who have worked with the figurines for many years have noted that many, if not most, of the figurines show clear signs of polish. While some objects, such as the Vogelherd horse (Figure 9.5a) were polished when they were first made, others appear to have become polished through repeated interactions. Indeed, multiple authors have stated their opinion that the polish visible reflects frequent handling, rather than resulting from the initial production process (Floss 2018, 27; Floss and Conard 2010, 207; Porr 2010a, 94). There seems to be a tactile importance to many of these figurines. Not only are they small and mobile, they were also touched frequently (Floss and Conard 2010, 207). There

was a real physical engagement with these objects, as predicted, though whether this involved one person or many is impossible to answer. This tactile engagement with these objects reminds us that these objects are not just mediators, physical representations or reflections of a memory or a person, but they are instead a part of those memories and relationships. Porr used the word 'mediator', but this does not perhaps do these objects justice.

Thus, we see a large number of worn objects during this period in this region. Given the uniqueness of these objects it is difficult to compare these to other periods, but in this period alone we can say with certainty that a number of these objects showed signs of wear supporting the interpretation that they were touched, held, or worn often.

Objects moving longer distances

The final expectation outlined in Chapter 8 was that we would expect to see objects such as those outlined in the previous expectations moving longer distances across the landscape either as people wore or carried them, or because these items were passed from one person or group to another.

As noted already, discerning the distance an object has travelled, and the nature of that movement, can be difficult. In the case of the Swabian Jura, we appear to have two issues: it is unclear where the raw material came from, and how people used the land at the time. Most of the figurines in the Swabian Jura were made of ivory. While there are two items which are not ivory, made instead of sandstone and antler respectively, there is currently no data as to where the raw materials for these objects were sourced from.

Ivory was clearly an important resource, not only for figurines but also for personal ornaments. The ivory used to carve the figurines was collected, provisioned, carved, and used locally, and would have accrued significance through the people's continued engagement with it. I noted in the last chapter that raw material provisioning might be a useful marker of the importance of the material and the objects created from it, and when combined with the clear symbolic significance that ivory had, it becomes clear that this material was important. When we consider the importance of animals, particularly mammoths, in the lives of the people who lived in this area at this time, the preferential use of ivory takes on new meaning. Ivory was not just a practical choice but a symbolic and emotional one. As archaeologists there is a temptation to treat materials from far away as 'exotic' or more significant than local materials. Yet while ivory was a common local material, it had intense significance for the people who

lived there. This is a useful reminder that simply because a resource is common or local, it does not follow that its significance is mundane.

As for tracking the distance that these objects travelled, this proves to be a difficult endeavour. Unfortunately, we do not know how the people of the Swabian Jura moved around this region. It may be that some of the figurines were made at one site and transported to another, but equally they may have been made and used at specific sites. We have evidence for ivory working at Geißenklösterle, Hohle Fels and Vogelherd, which suggests these figurines may have been made at these three sites. However, this cannot be said with certainty. The issue we have is that we simply do not know how exactly people used the land. It is known that the caves were used in the winter and spring, yet we are missing a great deal of information as we do not know if these objects were used in open air sites as well or if they were simply used in the caves at specific times of the year. There is a lack of known open-air sites, and for any sites found, preservation of organic material is unlikely. These sites were only used for part of the year and so we only have part of the full story. As it is, we know that these objects were used in the caves and used extensively. Beyond that, there is the possibility that they were moved from one site to another, but little can be said beyond this.

Whether we look at raw material provisioning or the distance that these objects appeared to travel, we have little consensus. The material that these objects were made from was clearly significant to them, not just in the production of figurines but in their material culture generally and appears to have been locally sourced. These objects do not seem to move long distances, though they may have moved from site to site, carried by members of the group as they moved between these sites. Perhaps this may not be so much an issue with the evidence but an issue with the original expectation itself. I used longer distances as a proxy for length of use or the significance of the object. However, when we look at the wear on these objects they were used extensively, and must have been important even though they did not travel long distances.

Discussion

During the Swabian Aurignacian, we see a sudden proliferation of figurines with no clear palaeoeconomic function. They are generally small, carefully carved from ivory (a significant local material) over many hours and show patterns of wear from repeated use or touch.

Thinking about the Swabian figurines from an attachment perspective clearly throws up some interesting insights into these objects. In line with the expectations outlined in the previous chapter, we can clearly see an increased diversification of material culture, and a proliferation of worn, portable objects. The small size of most of these items belies their significance for the people who made and used them. While they did not move long distances, the wear patterns on some of these items suggests that they were used or touched a great deal, suggesting extensive length of ownership. If we think, too, about the material used, it may not have been an unusual material, but it still held great importance.

Over the years, researchers have interpreted these objects in a myriad of ways. However, when we account for the insecure climatic and social context of the Swabian Aurignacian, as well as the objects themselves, it becomes clear that these figurines must have been both socially and emotionally significant. Yet, archaeologists have largely glossed over these areas, and so it is left for this chapter to consider how these objects may have fulfilled a deeply human need for socio-emotional connection. Here I would argue that it is our emotional flexibility, and our ability to utilise material culture to support it, which proved to be an important part of *Homo sapiens'* ability, not just to survive, but to thrive in the face of environmental, demographic, and social stressors.

Considering the context in which these figurines were made provides some insight into why these figurines may have been made and used. At the beginning of the Swabian Aurignacian, *Homo sapiens* would have (relatively) recently entered an area which, while abundant in resources, would not have been easily hospitable, and which was sensitive to ecological change, requiring “highly adaptive flexibility” from its inhabitants (Riehl et al. 2015, 164). If we consider this in the wider context of the Upper Palaeolithic, too, we can see that there were a number of stressors during this time. We see populations increasing in size, and trade networks becoming larger and more widespread. From a socio-emotional standpoint, this would have presented a challenge to the close-knit societies of the time. Finding ways to maintain personal security and fostering trust and collaboration with others would have been essential. However, such circumstances require not only behavioural or cognitive flexibility, but emotional flexibility, too.

With this in mind, the questions already covered in this chapter, regarding why this time and place seemed to encourage such material innovation, begin to answer themselves. The

Neanderthals of the preceding Middle Palaeolithic show relatively little evidence of symbolic material culture, so the lack of material culture in the Swabian Jura is unsurprising. Furthermore, Neanderthals likely practiced what Spikins has referred to as a more 'intimate sociality', with a focus on social relationships within one's group rather than an interest in external bonds, meaning higher attachment security and less need for compensatory attachment figures (Spikins et al. 2014; Spikins, Hitchens and Needham 2017).

In contrast, from the Gravettian period onwards we see almost no evidence of figurative representation whatsoever. This is interesting, as in much of wider Europe it is *after* the Aurignacian, not during, that we first see figurative material culture. There must be something about this time and place which encouraged innovation. I would be inclined to argue for a kind of 'Goldilocks' situation in which the climatic and social contexts were good enough to survive but challenging enough that these figurative representations provided a clear benefit. The Swabian Jura represented one of the first occupations of Europe in the Upper Palaeolithic, bringing the people who carved these figurines into a new area at a time of great climatic instability. This would have presented both environmental and social challenges, particularly for a group exploring this new area for the first time. Yet, we also know that they thrived. Perhaps these figurines provided a way to maintain group bonds or bolster security during difficult times.

In later periods, the climate deteriorated drastically, perhaps leading to the kinds of acute stresses that meant time could not be spent making figurines. We know that during the Last Glacial Maximum, the Swabian Jura was abandoned entirely due to extreme climate change, but even before this, the higher level of mobility that later Upper Palaeolithic populations may have needed to survive may also explain why there is so little evidence of figurative material culture after the Palaeolithic. If figurative material culture was meant primarily for use by a small group in one region, increased mobility and growing social networks may have encouraged the use of other forms of material culture, such as beads, which unlike figurines are found in this region throughout the Upper Palaeolithic.

Again, an attachment perspective provides us with a fascinating insight into aspects of these objects and this region that seem, at first glance, confusing. It also provides potential explanations for characteristics of the objects themselves. For example, while we can see underlying trends in form and material, the Swabian figurines overall show incredible

variation. While animal figurines are popular, mammoth and feline figurines particularly so, we also see many individual and unusual pieces, such as birds, fish and hedgehogs to name a few, as well as hybrid and anthropomorphic figurines in smaller numbers. Many of the figurines are covered in markings for which there is currently no adequate explanation, leading me to believe that these markings had some kind of individual meaning, now lost to time. Many are small, and some are perforated, suggesting that they were held or carried close to the body.

This variation is not seen in other types of objects in this region. Neither their personal ornamentation (largely in the form of double-perforated beads) nor their lithic assemblage suggest the diversity inherent within the figurines. This suggests to me that these figurines had an individual significance. If these objects were related to group identity, we might expect more stylistic trends such as that seen with the double-perforated beads unique to this region. Yet, as with many of the figurines and objects covered in Chapters 5 and 7, even if the form of these objects varied, the impact they had may have been similar. We have seen numerous times how attachment objects vary widely in form while all having a similar impact. In the Swabian Jura, too, objects with different forms could have had the same socio-emotional significance.

There is significance in the subjects of the figurines, too, which again suggests individual significance to these objects. If we look broadly at the three kinds of objects – animals, hybrids, and humans – we can see how these may all have functioned to provide security and comfort, albeit in different ways. These would have been people with an intense connection to the world around them, and so it is of no surprise that the material culture reflects this. Just as Alaska Native nations see animal figurines as a key part of their relationship with animals, so too may have the inhabitants of the Swabian Jura. These figurines would have taken time and effort to make, and perhaps in doing so, people bound themselves ever tighter to the animals within the landscape, or set themselves apart, in a direct, personal relationship. In effect, these figurines made material people's relationships with the wider world, anchoring them to the landscape, connecting them with the world around them. As Langley (2013, 616) has noted, "our innate ability to attribute emotional value and human (or animal) characteristics to features of the physical world allow us to bond with our environment and make a wild landscape feel more like 'home'". Perhaps the creation of animal figurines connected people to these animals, invoked their essence, and thus brought them feelings of comfort and

security. Such feelings could have been heightened by the material used, ivory, which may have been emotionally or spiritually significant, further reflecting the special relationship between humans and mammoths and cementing the link to their surroundings (Dutkiewicz et al. 2018, 465).

The hybrid figurines could have embodied a different kind of relationship, reflecting and enacting the more ambivalent human-feline relationship and perhaps their worldview with it. The larger Lion-Man figurine of Hohlenstein-Stadel may have been some kind of special offering or representation of beliefs, with the smaller lookalikes providing a more regular reminder of the security of these beliefs. While the subject is quite different to that of the animal figurines, these hybrid figurines could indeed also have functioned to provide security, again related to peoples' worldview or beliefs.

The female figurines, too, reflect an entirely different kind of subject. When we consider the nurturing response that these dolls can produce, noted by Stannard and Langley (2021, 10), it is easy to see how this figurine could have brought relief and security to the minds of those using it, perhaps as a reminder or an embodiment of a significant social relationship. Given the links between the attachment and caregiving behavioural systems, it is not outside of the realms of possibility that this object was cared for in some way. Perhaps a child used it as a doll to look after, or an adult used it as a comforting reminder of a loved one. While it is far more difficult to get at who or what this object represented, whether a specific person or an abstract idea, it is clear that the Hohle Fels figurine was significant. Having a loop instead of a head meant that it could be worn constantly, and such engagement with an object would have created an enduring emotional bond. Whether used by adults or children, these objects could have had a similar effect, providing security through links to the world around them, representing care through the time it took to create them, and even encouraging nurturing feelings.

The figurines of the Swabian Aurignacian present us with a number of fascinating questions as to their meaning and origins. When we take into account the contexts in which they were created, and when we think about the subjects and materials involved, we can say unequivocally that these would have been meaningful objects. Yet their individual meanings may have varied. For some, these objects may have encouraged an attachment to place, anchoring them to the land and evoking the forms of familiar animals. For others, these

objects may have represented or even enacted the belief system around which their worldview was structured. Yet others may have used these objects as personal markers of important social bonds.

In an environment of such change and insecurity, these figurines could have lessened the anxieties of those using them through repeated interaction and connected people together through shared socio-emotional bonds. While each object may have meant something different to each person, the effect would have been the same – bolstering security and providing a socio-emotional buffer during times of adversity. These objects are not just a reflection of thoughts and beliefs, but a way of feeling and thinking through their lives and the world around them.

Counterargument

The changes seen throughout the Swabian Aurignacian are, to some extent, mirrored in the Upper Palaeolithic more generally. Particularly during the Aurignacian, at the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic, we see an increasing diversification of symbolic material culture throughout Europe. Some could say that the argument outlined above might be relevant for the entirety of Upper Palaeolithic Europe, as we do see some of the same changes in material culture around this time, as well as an increasing number of objects moving longer distances, more so than in the Swabian Jura. However, I would argue that an attachment perspective is particularly relevant to this specific technocomplex.

While we do see increasing diversification throughout the European Aurignacian, it is particularly heightened in the Swabian Jura. Even in some of the richest Aurignacian assemblages in Europe, we do not see the level of diversity and amount of symbolic material culture that we see in the Swabian Jura. The Swabian Jura is truly innovative in a way that is unparalleled for this period.

Unlike many other Upper Palaeolithic sites, this region has no known parietal art. This raises questions, given that we know that the people here could create beautiful carvings, as to why cave art was not created. Again, I would suggest here that the portability of these objects is important: these objects were made to be moved, and to be carried around or worn. The importance of portability in this specific region is also made clear when we look at other Upper Palaeolithic carvings, where we do not see the portability that we see in the Swabian

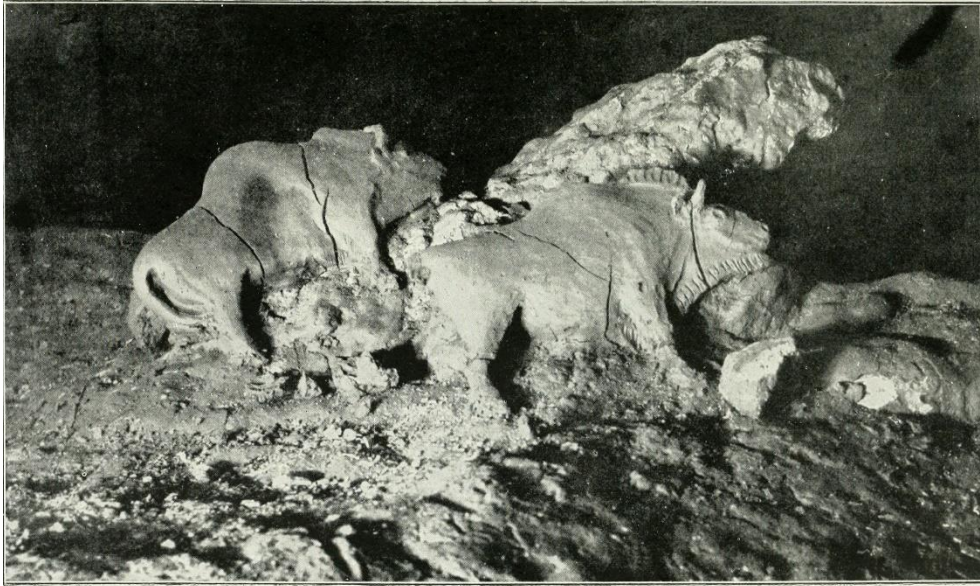


Figure 9.16: Bison carvings from Trois Frères Cave, France. Length: 61 and 63cm respectively. Source: Parkyn (1915).

Jura. The famous bison carvings (Figure 9.16) from the Magdalenian cave site of Trois Frères in southwestern France, for example, are carved into the ground of the cave and would have been immovable. It was not common for symbolic carvings to be portable in the Aurignacian. Most portable symbolic material culture in the Upper Palaeolithic appears to have come in the form of beads and other personal ornaments. Only from the Gravettian onwards do we see an increase in portable symbolic objects, the most famous example being the anthropomorphic figurines similar in form to the figurine at Hohle Fels, but this is a more widespread phenomenon, unlike the uniqueness and diversity of form seen in the Swabian Jura. There is clearly something unique about the Swabian Aurignacian to cause a proliferation of such unique, diverse portable art objects.

The forms of the objects themselves, as well as the patterns of polish on many of them, suggest that the figurines in this region had an important haptic element. The Upper Palaeolithic boasts a huge number of animal portrayals, particularly engravings on plaquettes and parietal art. The figurines of the Swabian Jura, in contrast, are *ronde-bosse* carvings. The form of the objects must have been important, and when we combine this with the patterns of polish on many of the figurines, this suggests that it was important that these objects were in this form, so that they could be handled and touched frequently.

The Swabian Jura was a difficult time, albeit one of great opportunity for those living within it. It presented climatic and social challenges, and one of the ways that people adapted to living within it was the creation of figurines in a truly diverse range of forms. The Aurignacian is

often remarked to be a 'pan-European' culture, but within this region we see a clear regional style of figurative material culture. While we see similar changes in material culture across the Upper Palaeolithic, none have the diversity, portability, or wear of the figurative material culture of the Swabian Jura. These objects are truly unique in a way unlike other material culture which proliferates during this time. We see, for example, sudden increases in personal ornaments such as beads, but these are more uniform, lacking the individuality of the Swabian figurines. These figurines were clearly unique and individual in both form and style, and thus likely individual in meaning, too.

There are, clearly, questions here surrounding why most of these objects appear to have been discarded with so little thought. There is, unfortunately, a great deal of information missing, which may be why there is little, if any, discussion of the discard of these objects in the wider literature. Some of these objects were found close to hearths, or in association with musical instruments, suggesting they were used at the same time, but why such significant objects would be discarded so easily defies explanation at present. Here, the uniqueness of the Hohlenstein-Stadel Lion-Man is clear once more, as this is the only figurine which appears to have been deposited with any forethought. This is an altogether unusual object, and it appears probable that its function was primarily religious or spiritual, but for the other figurines we are at a loss. It may be that these objects were perceived to have lost their meaning or significance, similar to some of the charms used by the Iñupiat (as noted in Chapter 7), which were often discarded as soon as they were perceived to have lost their power, no matter how significant they had been beforehand. However, this is purely speculation, and given that many of the figurines lack detailed stratigraphic context, having been discovered in excavations of the backdirt of some of these sites in recent years, we can only guess at the nature of their deposition.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have presented an alternative interpretation of figurative material culture found in the Swabian Jura. The Swabian Aurignacian saw a proliferation of figurines, diverse in both form and subject, with no clear palaeoeconomic function. These objects are entirely unique for both this region and this period, which makes it all the more unusual that such a large number should appear so suddenly in this time and place. Most of these objects are easily portable, with a number showing clear signs of loops or holes with which they could be

attached to clothing, string or bags to make them even easier to carry. These objects also show clear signs of polish, apparently from frequent handling, suggesting they were important in some way, and this importance may have been magnified by the material used, ivory, which likely held a special significance.

There have been many attempts to interpret these objects, but none truly engage with the socio-emotional significance of these objects. Even those that do, often treat these objects only as passive reflections of relationships. Bearing in mind what we know about attachment, it becomes easier to think about how objects actively embody and enact socio-emotional relationships, both those between people and those with their beliefs and the world around them. In turn, these objects may have provided incredible security to the people using them. This provides a simple yet reasonable explanation for why the people of the Swabian Aurignacian chose to spend so much time creating such intricate carvings alongside traditional material culture such as beads, lithics, and organic tools. The interpretation presented in this chapter provides a novel way of thinking about why people made and used these objects and helps us to think through the patterns of material culture seen in this region during this period.

Whether in the past or the present, one constant of human life is our sociality. Humans are innately social (and emotional) beings, and the attachment system is a human universal. Attachment theory provides a way of understanding the connections between our social and emotional lives, and object attachment provides a way of acknowledging and understanding the role that material culture plays in embodying and enacting these connections. Although objects are one of the major ways in which humans navigate our worlds, their socio-emotional significance has largely remained unrecognised.

For archaeologists, object attachment can explain confusing patterns of material culture in the past, patterns which may previously have been attributed to ritual or symbolism. An attachment perspective provides new ways of thinking about material culture, even as far back as the Palaeolithic. It is by no means exclusive of other approaches, though; these could also have been objects to delineate who these people were, or to communicate one's identity within or without a group. Yet an attachment perspective reminds us to think about how people would have felt when using these objects. Humans do not create and make such small, carefully carved objects without any emotional element to them; thinking about these objects

through the lens of attachment theory reminds us that people in the past lived, and thought, and *felt*.

An understanding of object attachment has wider ramifications beyond this specific time and place, and it may be interesting to consider wider patterns of change in material culture using an attachment perspective. I discussed earlier, for example, how an attachment perspective sheds light on the role of objects in the adaptive success of *Homo sapiens* moving into new areas at a time of great insecurity and adversity. Thus, it may be interesting to look at other instances of instability or insecurity to determine whether there was a concurrent change in material culture. We could, for example, consider scenarios in which the environment presented a challenge, enough still to survive but still requiring adaptive flexibility, such as populations in Eurasian refugia during the Last Glacial Maximum. Alternatively, we could consider contexts which presented potential social insecurity, such as the movement of one group into the habitat of another. We might, for example, consider how Britons reacted materially to the social and economic upheaval of the Roman invasion and then increasing Romanisation, particularly in the years immediately after AD 43. An attachment perspective, though rooted in psychological theory, is clearly not restricted to the Palaeolithic.

This perspective may also shed light, conversely, on how objects can become problematic because of our attachment to them. Büster (2021) has considered the notion of ‘problematic stuff’ in the Iron Age, using ‘continuing bonds’ theory to suggest that cached objects found in roundhouses at Broxmouth may have been objects belonged to the deceased, which those left behind were unable to discard. Attachment theory can provide a complementary element to these analyses, helping us to consider what kinds of objects are most likely to be retained and how we might identify problematic examples of attachment in the archaeological record. It also provides insights into the nature of attachment beyond death, providing insights into why people find themselves unable to discard certain objects.

The insights gained from attachment theory provide not a counterargument to other interpretations, but a complementary perspective on the past. By considering the socio-emotional significance of objects, we afford them their true agency, and acknowledge the pivotal role that they have played in human development. In the next, final chapter of this thesis, I will bring together the final insights from this study of object attachment. I will

consider how an attachment perspective might be useful for archaeologists, and how this may help to shape our understanding of our socio-emotional links to the world around us.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

As I finish writing this thesis, Norris still sits on my bed, ever present and ever supportive. During this project alone, he has been there for me through house moves, life changes, and the upheaval of a pandemic. All throughout this, he has provided me with the comfort and security that I needed in uncertain times.

This thesis has allowed me to interrogate the reasons behind our seemingly unique attachment to objects. We have seen that attachment objects are far more ubiquitous than we often assume, though they are complicated by their ability to take multiple forms, and the fact that the nature of our relationships with attachment objects varies widely. For some, these are objects of great joy, reminding them of loved ones or happy events, while for others these objects can bring sadness and feelings of loss. Yet whether our reactions to them are overwhelmingly positive or more nuanced, we keep these objects close by, in our homes and in our hearts.

In this final chapter, I will consider exactly how my understanding of object attachment has developed during this thesis, and the implications of this research. I will begin by returning to the initial project aims set out in Chapter 1, to determine whether these aims have been achieved. This will then allow me to consider the broader significance of this research, how it

contributes to the wider archaeological and psychological literature, and the limitations of which we need to be aware. This chapter ends by considering how this area of research may be broadened out in the future, not just for archaeology but for psychology and psychiatry, too.

Reassessing the aims and outcomes

In this thesis, I have considered object attachment from an interdisciplinary perspective, grounded in psychological, anthropological and archaeological approaches, to consider how we might better understand humans' emotional attachments to certain objects, both today and in the past. In doing so, I have discovered much about how object attachment functions, and how it influences both human behaviour and objects themselves. At this point, we can return to the initial aims of this thesis and consider whether they have been achieved, and what I have found.

a) To develop a basic understanding of object attachment and how it affects material culture

In Chapters 2 and 3, I critically appraised the existing literature on both attachment theory generally and object attachment specifically, while also considering a number of interrelated themes in anthropological and archaeological method and theory.

In doing so, I was able to successfully develop a basic understanding of object attachment, as a cultural co-option of the psychobiological attachment system. To recap, I defined an attachment object as an inanimate object:

- Whose presence provides an individual with a sense of comfort and security, especially in times of need
- Which is preferred by the individual over other objects
- Which the user chooses to rely upon for protection, or seeks proximity to, in times of insecurity
- To which the user feels some degree of distress upon separation or loss.

In Chapter 2, I suggested that attachment objects are likely no less impactful than interpersonal attachment relationships, and Chapter 3 provided a greater understanding as

to why this is. These objects are active socio-emotional and mnemonic beings with which we come to have a deep and meaningful connection over time.

In the development of this basic understanding of object attachment, I came to realise that a number of questions remained unanswered, particularly regarding how object attachment varies, and whether attachment objects have any common characteristics. Regarding the latter point, it became clear that in order to understand how object attachment affects objects, I would need to undertake research of my own into this area, which had not yet been explored by psychologists or archaeologists at all. There was also the more theoretical question of how object attachment differs from other forms of material engagement. This was a question arguably more suited to anthropology and archaeology, disciplines mired in the study of material culture and people's relationships with it, than psychology, a discipline more interested in people than the objects they make and use.

Yet, while Chapters 2 and 3 threw up a great many more questions than I perhaps anticipated, in undertaking this part of the thesis I was able to fulfil my first aim of developing a basic understanding of object attachment.

b) To consider methodologies and approaches which might allow us to refine this understanding and create expectations relating to the existence of object attachment in the archaeological record

There were many different methods with which I might have refined my understanding of object attachment. In this thesis, however, I focused on psychology, anthropology, and archaeology (the latter two particularly through the use of ethnoarchaeology). These approaches are very different, requiring different theoretical and methodological backgrounds and skills, yet in practice they proved to be complementary, providing a well-rounded understanding of object attachment.

If ethnoarchaeology is the study of ethnographic data to answer archaeological questions, then the first approach I used might be considered 'psychoarchaeology': the use of psychological data and methods for archaeological purposes. A psychological approach allowed me to interrogate some of the unanswered questions thrown up in the first part of the thesis. This allowed me to focus not just on the people who are attached to objects, but the objects themselves, enabling an understanding of both beings involved in object

attachment. The findings from Chapter 5 supported existing literature suggesting a clear link between attachment-based, 'dispositional' anxiety and object attachment, but also expanded the notion of anxiety further to include 'situational' anxiety. The notion of situational anxiety is not one which has been considered in detail in the existing literature, and thus my research has been able to shed more light on how object attachment may also function on a short-term basis in situations of particular need, be they situations of particular anxiety, change, or uncertainty.

With regards to the objects themselves, the psychological research was particularly informative, shedding light on some of the more common characteristics of these objects, and countering some of my own assumptions. I had predicted that attachment objects were more likely to be small, portable, and soft. Of these three predictions, only the second truly held up, as size proved not to be an impediment to attachment, and soft items were far less common than hard items. Despite the common cultural Western trends of attachment objects such as cuddly toys and jewellery, I also found that attachment objects can and do take any form, leading to incredible variety. Unsurprisingly, it also became clear that these objects have an intense social and mnemonic significance, with an overwhelming majority of participants noting that these objects are significant as reminders of loved ones or important events. This is, in my opinion, perhaps one of the most significant indicators that an object is an attachment object, as the social aspect of the relationship mirrors that of interpersonal attachment relationships. As with interpersonal relationships, attachment objects are also significant sensory objects, and while softness is not necessarily important, sensory engagement of all kinds is. Altogether, these points likely explain why attachment objects take on such unique value.

The ethnoarchaeological research, however, proved to be an important counterapproach to the psychological research, broadening my understanding of peoples' relationships with objects in certain non-Western societies. Interestingly, the object analysis section of this research was less successful, as it proved incredibly difficult to discern particular patterns of wear on the objects studied, particularly as many of these objects had been passed between owners and then stored in museum collections for decades. On top of this was the added difficulty that many figurines which looked very similar had very different meanings. Yet, a consideration of the form of these objects and the contexts in which they were created and used was invaluable. It provided me with the opportunity to consider the experience of

attachment in non-Western cultures who have a very different relationship with the wider world, including material culture. The difficulty in considering the material culture itself reinforced the notion that attachment objects can take any form, and may have multiple other functions besides those of attachment. From an archaeological perspective, this was also a pertinent reminder of the difficulty involved in determining patterns of wear specific to object attachment, particularly when the exact physical nature of engagement with such objects appears to be so varied.

Arguably the ethnoarchaeological literature was most significant in giving me a better understanding of how object attachment is, or is not expressed, in particular contexts. It demonstrated, for example, that the existence of other strong attachment relationships appears to inhibit the widespread use of individualised attachment objects in some societies. In the case of the Iñupiat and Yup'ik, object attachment took a different form, with people attached to dolls, charms, and amulets which provided protection, but also able to easily discard these items once they had lost their power. A general lack of emotional attachment to objects appeared to result from the closeness of other attachment relationships, particularly those with other people and their wider environment, and the social flexibility of both cultures. However, this does not mean that there was no attachment to objects; many of these charms and amulets could be argued to function at least on a temporary basis as attachment objects, as they fulfilled most, if not all, of my criteria for an attachment object.

Considering that emotional experiences are relatively neglected in ethnography, this research may represent a first step towards understanding how we might think about emotional experiences from a truly cross-cultural perspective. Ethnographic literature on attachment in particular is incredibly poor, so my work also adds to this literature in presenting new insights, particularly the ways in which the presence of different kinds of attachment relationships intersect and influence one another.

Thus, despite being very different, I was able to use psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches as complementary methods for refining my understanding of object attachment, fulfilling the second aim of this thesis. Both approaches allowed me to consider how object attachment varies inter- and intraculturally among humans, while also providing insights into the effects of object attachment upon the objects themselves, both in terms of their characteristics, and the physical traces of attachment left upon them. Altogether, this

interdisciplinary approach meant that I was able to consider object attachment through both people and objects, rather than focusing primarily on the former, as most psychological research into object attachment has done thus far.

The psychological and ethnoarchaeological approaches combined presented a more nuanced understanding of object attachment, which allowed me to complete the second aim of the thesis by developing a set of expectations for the archaeological record. This took the form of a series of statements outlining contexts in which we might expect to see object attachment in the archaeological record, potential behavioural effects of an increased attachment to objects, and the effects upon material culture. It was predicted at the end of Chapter 8 that at times of stress, uncertainty, or insecurity, we might see an increase in unusual, portable objects with increased patterns of use-wear or polish, moving longer distances or having been used for long periods of time. This then allowed me to move on to the final aim of my thesis: evaluating these expectations using an archaeological case study.

c) To evaluate these expectations using an archaeological case study

In Chapter 9, I reconsidered Aurignacian material culture from the Swabian Jura from an explicitly attachment-based perspective. This chapter allowed me to test whether this perspective was useful in rethinking material culture in a particular region and during a particular time, and the Swabian Jura proved a fascinating region to reanalyse.

This allowed for a concerted effort to understand the social *and* emotional significance of the material culture in this region. It gave me the chance to thoroughly think through the socio-emotional ramifications of the figurative material culture so unique to the Swabian Aurignacian. Looking at these objects, both individually and as a corpus, through the lens of attachment provided a way to consider the biological, cultural, and contextual factors which had influenced their creation and use. In the process, it provided unique insights into the region itself, shedding light on a possible answer to the substantial debate over why the Swabian Aurignacian saw such dramatic material developments in this one specific period, changes which disappeared almost completely in the following millennia.

This case study gave me the chance to properly test out and think through the expectations previously outlined in Chapter 8. It became clear that while the first three expectations appeared to be helpful and relevant, the fourth expectation regarding objects travelling long distances was more problematic and may require rethinking. Given that the third expectation

predicted an increase in worn objects, which can also be caused by a prolonged length of ownership, it may be that the fourth expectation needs to be combined with the third, and changed instead to 'an increase in objects which are worn, have travelled longer distances than is typical of the time, or both'.

The case study was incredibly effective in helping me to think through the expectations that had been made. More importantly, it was also able to demonstrate that an attachment perspective can provide a complementary approach to the study of the past. Rather than disproving other interpretations, an attachment perspective allows us to consider the social and emotional ramifications of objects, both those which may primarily be attachment objects, and those which have other purposes, functions, and meanings.

What is the significance, and what are the implications, of these findings?

The research undertaken is not simply of relevance to the one case study outlined in the previous chapter. Indeed, the findings of this thesis have wider relevance for psychology, in the further expansion of, and explanation of, attachment theory, as well as archaeology, in its consideration of the socio-emotional significance of material culture.

For psychology

One of the most obvious points made clear by this thesis is that object attachment is far more common than often assumed. Despite years of research into attachment theory, there still appears to be a prevailing assumption that object attachment is a reflection of an unhealthy relationship with objects, or that we are too materialistic, or too childish, if we are attached to objects. Yet this research forms part of a growing corpus of work acknowledging that object attachment can be a lifelong behaviour and, even more importantly, that it can be a genuinely healthy mechanism of socio-emotional support. As noted in Chapter 2, the majority of studies into object attachment in adulthood focus on its role in psychopathological conditions, but the research undertaken here has demonstrated that, for many adults, their relationships with their attachment objects are healthy and actively helpful. Attachment objects provide feelings of security vital to our health and wellbeing, and I suspect that their use is much more common than the literature currently tells us, and given the continuing stigma against these

objects, I suspect it is more common in the general population than even my research has shown.

Possibly the most useful contribution made by this thesis is its attempt to consider object attachment from a non-Western perspective, too. Attachment research still has much work to do to become a truly cross-cultural framework of knowledge, and the research conducted here has provided some interesting insights into the existence of (and lack of) object attachment in two non-Western, non-industrialised cultures. This is one of the most interesting areas covered by this thesis, but is also the area which most urgently requires further study, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

This thesis has also provided insights into exactly why and when object attachment is useful, broadening our understanding of the causal factors involved in the expression of object attachment. Understanding that object attachment is not just the result of long-term dispositional anxiety, such as that caused by an anxious attachment style, but can also result from short-term change, insecurity, and adversity (or 'situational anxiety'), may be extremely useful in considering when and how objects can be of most help. From a therapeutic perspective, this may provide further insights into why certain objects are important at certain times, and it may also further aid psychologists in understanding the distinction between the normal, healthy use of attachment objects, and more pathological behaviours which are not beneficial in the long run.

In the same respect, this research has broadened our understanding of what can be an attachment object. For psychology, this may not seem to be an important matter, as psychology is interested more in the causes and effects of object attachment rather than the objects themselves. However, from a therapeutic perspective, these insights may be of use in considering the types of objects that might be most effective in providing a sense of security. While comfort blankets and stuffed toys are indeed very common attachment objects, it becomes clear from this research that attachment objects can take a wide range of forms, but this does not affect their efficacy. In some ways, this research may help us to move beyond existing clichés around certain items, to recognise that anything can be an attachment object. What matters is not so much the form but the object's importance or resonance for the person using it. This might, for example, help psychologists working with people attempting

to deal with insecurity, loss, or change, in finding ways to deal with this anxiety, and by demonstrating the kinds of objects most likely to bring a sense of security.

For psychology, then, the significance of this research lies in its deepening of our understanding of what object attachment is, what encourages it, and how it may be of use in developing healthy human-object attachment relationships. By supporting and broadening existing research into object attachment, the research in this thesis makes a small contribution to an ongoing and, it is to be hoped, growing area of interest in developmental and social psychology.

For archaeology

This research also has important implications for archaeology. It has been said again and again throughout this thesis, but must be reiterated here: if we are to better understand the full richness of the human experience in the past, we require rigorous theoretical and methodological frameworks to help us think through, interpret, and understand emotional experiences.

Object attachment is one such experience. We have seen that our socio-emotional attachment to objects may have played a key role in the evolution of both human life and material culture. Object attachment is far more common than expected, and as a result this is clearly something that archaeologists should be considering more routinely in their research, including thinking about how it can be utilised more widely in archaeology. The case study used here was Palaeolithic, but this is clearly an approach with relevance for anyone interested in human emotional experiences at any time in the past. As a biological capacity shaped by our cultural and individual contexts, object attachment is a capacity which has likely been with humans since their inception. We should be encouraging its study more in the future, or at the very least encouraging archaeologists to consider object attachment in their interpretations of sites, assemblages, and artefacts. Object attachment is more than just a simple attachment to objects; it influences how we think, feel, and act. As such, understanding and analysing objects through an attachment perspective tells us not just about people or objects, but of the webs of relations into which they find themselves tied, and the significant social and emotional effects that this has.

The findings from this thesis may also help us to understand attachment on a broader basis, considering attachment relationships with both humans and nonhumans. In this thesis, I have

considered our relationship with objects specifically, but an attachment framework in archaeology can and should be broadened out to consider a wider range of attachment relationships, as will be discussed further on in this chapter. This promises to be a genuinely innovative use of attachment theory, and a truly novel way to think about our relationships with the world around us in a less dualistic way. The approach used here, focused on objects, is significant as it provides a clear example of how archaeologists can understand seemingly ineffable aspects of human life. In short, it demonstrates how seemingly immaterial experiences like emotion can be made material, and thus how they can come within the reach of archaeological analysis.

In interrogating the notion of attachment, I have begun to tease out the differences between attachment, and other kinds of material engagement, particularly social and emotional relationships. In doing so, we can consider how object attachment is a unique form of material engagement and how it differs from other forms of material engagement. As noted above, the definition of an attachment object outlined in this thesis may allow for a clearer understanding of how object attachment is unique. For example, heirlooms may be attachment objects, but not all are, and considering the definition of object attachment here allows us to delineate between heirlooms which are attachment objects, and those that are not. Furthermore, not all attachment objects are heirlooms, either. In this case, I would argue that heirlooms do not necessarily provide a sense of comfort and security, nor are they preferred over other objects, nor are they all relied upon for protection. Similarly, attachment objects may evoke a sense of nostalgia, often being objects with intense mnemonic significance, but not all attachment objects are necessarily nostalgic. Indeed, nostalgia often involves a feeling of wistfulness towards the past, whereas many attachment-related memories do not seem to involve this same sense of wistfulness, at least not judging from the responses of the participants in the psychological studies outlined in Chapter 5. Rather than longing for the past, many (though, naturally, not all) respondents note feeling stronger and more secure in the memories imparted by their attachment object. On a similar note, I must reiterate here that attachment objects often become, over time, comforting in and of their own right, not just because of the memories associated with them. Attachment objects can be nostalgic, but this is not a necessary part of the attachment relationship – indeed, many attachment objects are not related to nostalgic feelings in any way. We can begin to see here the clear differences between attachment objects, and objects which are heirlooms or

nostalgic in some way. While these categories can intersect, defining attachment objects is useful for future research teasing out the ways in which object attachment differs from other kinds of material engagement, and considering how object attachment is a unique form of material engagement. In the archaeological literature, on the few occasions that an emotional attachment to an object in the past is presumed, it is done rather flippantly, with no consideration of the effects of this relationship on people or the objects themselves. Such discussions of object attachment are so brief as to add nothing to our understanding of object attachment.

In essence, then, the significance of this thesis for archaeology lies in its ability to make us consider object attachment, its causes and its effects, in a more theoretically and methodologically rigorous way. Far from the traditional assumption that emotion cannot be seen in the archaeological record, we may be able to forge a pathway towards greater understanding of emotion, affect, and feeling in the past, even all the way back into the Palaeolithic.

What contribution does this project make?

At its heart, this thesis is aimed at developing a better understanding of object attachment, and demonstrating the wide-ranging effects of this one single socio-emotional experience. In doing so, it may shape how we interpret the connections between people and objects, and the wider effects that this can have. Object attachment is also a clear example of the links between the social, emotional, and material aspects of our lives, and this thesis demonstrates how all three can be connected to develop a stronger understanding of the social and emotional elements of our engagement with material culture.

Archaeology is still attempting to find its footing when trying to consider the lived experience of emotion in the past, given the inherent difficulties in an often ephemeral and variable aspect of human life. The approaches that exist are laudable, but often leave a feeling of unfulfilled potential, as they can offer little to no guidance on how to take such studies forward for use in other contexts and periods.

This thesis has thus contributed to archaeology in a small way by testing a novel approach to the study of one particular emotional experience: object attachment. In doing so, it helps us to understand object attachment itself, as outlined above, but more so than this, it provides

an explicit way to consider different emotional experiences. The four-step method used within this thesis, developing a basic understanding of one emotional experience, refining this understanding using interdisciplinary approaches, developing expectations for the archaeological record, and testing these expectations, may be useful in thinking about other kinds of emotional experiences, not just object attachment. The approach used here may seem deceptively simple, but it provides a clear set of steps for deepening archaeological understanding of specific emotional experiences, and considering how they might be materially expressed in the archaeological record.

There were many potential approaches that I could have used to undertake this research, but the combination of psychology and ethnoarchaeology has been a constructive one. It allows us to consider the underlying biological mechanisms which unite all humans, while also accounting for cultural and even individual variation and its causes. In doing so, we can recognise the complexity of lived emotional experiences like attachment, here developing an understanding of how object attachment is expressed variably, but in structured ways, and thus well within the reach of archaeological analysis. While there are limitations to this research, this thesis has gone some way to attempting to balance and elucidate the biological, cultural, and individual factors which shape variations in object attachment.

In doing so, it contributes towards how we in industrialised nations can better understand these objects, and how we as archaeologists can better approach their potential significance in the past. Thus, not only does it help us to understand peoples' experience of object attachment, it also helps us to think more carefully about material culture, too. This approach thus takes a place among the broader 'material turn' in archaeology, which attempts to acknowledge the agency of objects, and their role as individual actors in our world. With object attachment, we begin to understand the differing ways in which humans manage their social and emotional needs, and the role of material culture in doing so. An understanding of object attachment provides us with a simple example of how objects can even have unexpected effects upon us – even effects which are entirely unwanted, as shown by the sadness evoked by some of these objects, or peoples' inability to throw these objects away, even though they wish to. Through this thesis we can understand that attachment objects affect us deeply and genuinely, and while we may be able to control this experience, this is not always the case.

This thesis thus contributes to the wider discourse over materiality, contributing a detailed study of how our social, emotional, and material lives can become intertwined. It reminds us of how our social and emotional lives are inextricably linked to one another, and how they can be bolstered and supported by the material culture around us. It reminds us, as do many other studies, that objects are not just passive bits of material, but active social and emotional agents, shaping us just as we shape them.

The contribution this thesis makes is not, it must be said, at the exclusion of other approaches. As has been written multiple times here, objects can have multiple meanings and purposes, and attachment objects can and do have other functions. As such, the approach taken here can be included alongside other frameworks of reference. An attachment perspective is not aimed at supplanting other interpretations, methods, and theories; rather, it deepens our understanding of the objects around us.

This thesis has made a small, yet it is to hoped useful, contribution to the study of the social, emotional, and material in archaeology. Through this thesis, we understand that object attachment is a significant factor in our health and wellbeing, and we can see how important material culture can be in shaping our social and emotional lives. This thesis has also provided an example of an interdisciplinary approach which could easily be used by others to develop archaeological expectations for other kinds of emotional experiences. In doing so, it forms part of the corpus of theoretical and methodological work broadly referred to as the 'material turn', acknowledging the agency of material culture, as well as the ways in which humans and objects are tied up in webs of relations, continually shaping and reshaping one another.

Limitations

As with any project, however, this thesis is not infallible. There are limitations to both the specific methods and theories upon which this thesis is based, as well as the broader approach taken.

Limitations of attachment theory, and studies of object attachment

One of the limitations of this thesis involves attachment theory itself. Since its inception in the mid-20th century, attachment theory has been subject to continued research and redevelopment, such that Harlow (2021, 9) has argued that today "there is no longer one 'attachment theory'...over time there have evolved a number of theoretical explanations of

human attachment". As has been discussed in previous chapters, attachment theory is still contentious, with some going so far as to renounce it altogether (for example, see Vinopal 2019), although the number of psychologists who truly renounce attachment theory entirely is small.

Attachment theory is not a perfect theory, and has been subject to criticism and debate regarding the degree to which it relies (or over-relies) on biology and neuroscience (Harlow 2021), as well as a continued lack of understanding of the genetics of attachment (Erkoreka et al. 2021; Picardi, Giuliani and Gigantesco 2020), among other issues. Yet, despite concerns over the validity and the replicability of attachment research (van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg 2021), the findings in this thesis have largely supported the existing literature (particularly regarding the role of attachment anxiety), suggesting that this theory holds water. Attachment theory is not dead, by any means.

However, there are limitations to this theory. Most importantly, attachment is very difficult to measure. As noted in Chapter 5, I used the ECR-RS, a self-report measure of attachment style, and all questions in my survey were self-reported and thus subjective. This issue was already discussed in Chapter 5 and thus I will not cover it again in detail; nevertheless, this is a point which needs to be remembered in the interpretation of my data.

Interestingly, one limitation which I had not anticipated prior to the psychological studies was the fact that some people are, to a greater or lesser degree, unaware of their attachment to an object. Anecdotally, I have noticed that people are quick to say that they do not have an object to which they are emotionally attached, but when they are told what an attachment object is, they are often easily able to think of an object which matches this description. There was, for example, an indication among some of the participants in my psychological research that they were unwittingly attached to a particular object, or that they demonstrated attachment-like behaviour towards an object which they outwardly stated was not the focus of any emotional connection (for example, Interviewee 13 in Study 2 (Appendix 1), who noted that they had lost a mug and were actually quite bothered by its disappearance). In this research I have found that people are more attached to objects than is often assumed, and I am of the opinion that this is not an anomaly, but the norm. However, the true prevalence of object attachment is difficult to discern. This can make it difficult to study, particularly in the kinds of snapshot-type surveys that I undertook. Longitudinal and observational studies of

the type often conducted with children would be valuable here, allowing us to consider people's engagement with, and attachment to, material culture on a long-term basis.

Narrow purview of ethnoarchaeological research

Object attachment is by no means a 'core universal' behaviour. While all humans are capable of object attachment, it is not expressed in everyone equally, and for some it is a behaviour which is not expressed at all. The Western conception of attachment, and attachment theory, does not currently seem adequate to explain ethnographic experiences of interpersonal and nonhuman relationships, particularly given the significance of alternative attachment figures (such as, arguably, the environment and land around them) and the alternative parenting strategies used, which are very different to those often assumed in attachment theory.

The narrow purview of the ethnoarchaeological research that I undertook is thus a limitation of this research. I was able to study two non-Western nations in one particular region of the world, but this does not make a representative study of all non-Western nations, nor does it pretend to be. This is clearly an area for additional study, broadening out attachment research (and that of object attachment) to consider a larger number of cultures and to consider a broader spectrum of lifeways. Such research may take many years, but it would be invaluable for a more genuinely cross-cultural conception of object attachment. There are, thankfully, an increasing number of studies and books looking at attachment cross-culturally, but we will also benefit from studies focused particularly on humans' attachments to objects, too.

A more pressing concern relates to the ethnoarchaeological research that I undertook myself. It is a regret of mine that I was not able to involve the Iñupiat and Yup'ik communities themselves in my research. However, there is luckily a growing corpus of literature written by members of these nations, which provided helpful and unique insights into their lifeways, including their relationships with material culture, and some of the researchers with whom I spoke were able to direct me to resources that they had developed in conjunction with elders from both nations. I had begun to make tentative plans to make contact with an Iñupiat artist in Washington DC, through a contact of mine at the Smithsonian, but this was abruptly stopped due to the pandemic, which meant I had to leave DC very abruptly, and which cut me off from contact with my colleagues at the Smithsonian, due to most of the staff being furloughed for many months.

However, overall, I feel that I took the most respectful path I could with the ethnoarchaeological research in the limited time available. I learnt a lot during the process about how to make my research more ethical and more respectful, and this is one of the most significant lessons that I will take from my PhD into future research.

Limitations of the broad approach

Potentially of most significance here, there are arguably limitations with the broad approach taken throughout this thesis. Being an exploratory project, I have never argued that my approach is the only valid one, and some might disagree with the direction taken, preferring other options and methodologies.

In the earliest iteration of this project, I aimed to use experimental archaeology to develop a better understanding of the physical traces of attachment, but this was not possible in the time available, and after a better understanding of the psychological material had been developed, it became clear that ethnoarchaeological research was more necessary than the experimental research in order to answer key questions regarding patterns of variation in object attachment.

However, the broad approach undertaken here was an inductive one, which may be criticised for not 'proving' object attachment. With an inductive approach, it could be argued, someone might tackle this subject from a different angle and develop different expectations altogether. Yet I would argue that this misunderstands the point of this project, which is not to 'prove' the existence of object attachment or attachment objects, but is aimed at better understanding how it varies, and how it may be archaeologically visible and thus within the reach of more detailed study.

I do not pretend to say that this research is entirely complete, nor that it 'solves' questions surrounding attachment theory. Indeed, in the process of undertaking this research, I have found that for every question I have been able to answer, many more questions have revealed themselves in turn.

Considering future research

Far from being frustrating, however, these unresolved questions are exciting, as they pave the way for future studies into object attachment, as well as the study of attachment more generally, in archaeology. There are a number of areas into which it would be worthwhile to

expand this research in the future, whether methodologically through ethnoarchaeological research and experimental studies, by thinking through the uses of this research for archaeology more broadly, or even outside of archaeology, in psychological and psychiatric practice.

Expanding ethnographic and cross-cultural research into object (and other forms of) attachment

Despite the improved understanding of object attachment developed throughout this thesis, attachment theory still has its blind spots. One of the areas most in need of additional work is cross-cultural research into object attachment. This is not a new concern; multiple researchers have criticised the over-Westernised nature of attachment theory, calling for work to ensure that attachment theory is relevant cross-culturally, not just in Western societies (Mesman et al. 2016; Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz 2016; Morelli and Henry 2013; Quinn and Mageo 2013). The Westernised origins of attachment theory mean that it has taken time for researchers to consider cross-cultural variation in attachment. Given the paucity of literature specifically addressing object attachment, there is unsurprisingly a lack of cross-cultural research into socio-emotional bonds with objects in different cultures.

Thus, a clear area for future research will involve expanding our understanding of object attachment even further by considering relationships with objects in non-Western cultures, both industrialised and non-industrialised. As I noted earlier in this chapter, for such work to be undertaken properly, it will likely take years, as the literature alone will not serve as a sufficient source of knowledge. It may come down to researchers working with a number of different cultures including attachment in their analyses, and considering material culture in a more direct way.

The ethnoarchaeological research undertaken as part of this thesis demonstrated that the presence of other attachment relationships can have an effect on the expression of object attachment, and so it will be worthwhile to consider the complexity of attachment relationships more generally across many cultures. Previous research has demonstrated, for example, how differing parenting styles, themselves shaped by prevailing cultural norms and values, can shape the experience of object attachment in young children (Hong and Townes 1976); however, we must also consider the role of other attachment relationships, such as attachment to place and attachment to religious figures or beliefs. These may also be

significant relationships affecting the expression of object attachment across entire cultures, and more detailed research into this area may well prove fruitful. Other sources of attachment were considered to a certain extent in the psychological research undertaken for this thesis, but these results were largely inconclusive, so more study is needed.

Such work might involve, for example, considering the relationships between people and objects in a larger number of cultures, considering the differing importance of different types of attachment figures, or simply considering in more detail the prevalence of object attachment across different cultures. Attachment theory is a powerful framework for understanding human socio-emotional bonds across the lifespan, but if it is to be at its most useful for archaeologists, we must further develop our understanding of its cross-cultural similarities and differences. This thesis has contributed towards this endeavour, but this was by no means exhaustive.

Undertaking experiments into the traces of attachment

One of the original methods that I planned to draw upon in this thesis was the use of experimental archaeology, in order to better understand the physical traces left on attachment objects. This would have involved developing tests to determine and identify the physical characteristics and patterns of attachment handling (for example, surface sheen), as opposed to patterns from curation or other handling. However, such work could also include experimental psychological studies looking at how people physically engage with their attachment objects, whether there are any patterns, and whether such patterns are archaeologically visible. It would be most interesting to see whether people touch attachment objects in ways which differ from other kinds of handling – in effect, whether attachment-related wear shows any unique traces or patterns of use-wear. In reality, I suspect that attachment objects are subject to a variety of handling styles and methods of engagement, so such traces may be difficult to decipher from an archaeological standpoint. However, it would be interesting to test this hypothesis.

A more fruitful area of research would be to consider other traces which may be indirectly connected to attachment, such as traces of (confusingly named) physical attachments such as holes or loops for thread or string, such as that seen on the Hohle Fels figurine in Chapter 9. These, at least, may show evidence that an object was regularly used, worn, or carried, and along with contextual background, may provide an interesting addition to analyses of material

culture through an attachment perspective. It may, for example, be interesting to look at assemblages of objects to consider those which are particularly worn, or show unusual patterns of wear or particularly extensive use-wear traces, as this may suggest that the object was used in an unusual way or was used more often than other objects.

This is clearly an area that we still do not understand, so requires further study and consideration.

Other uses for attachment in archaeology

The two suggestions above involve very specific methods of analysing object attachment, but attachment theory can be used to understand a wider range of relationships, from pets to places to religious beliefs (Beck and Madresh 2008; Cookman 1996; Hidalgo and Hernández 2001; Kirkpatrick 1998; Zilcha-Mano, Mikulincer and Shaver 2011), all of which may be of relevance to archaeology. Our understanding of attachment as a whole may benefit from the development of a broader archaeology of attachment.

Social relationships

While it may seem obvious, it is important here to mention attachment theory's potential as a way of thinking through social relationships in the past. Given the attachment system's biological basis, we can be sure that social relationships had the same emotional resonance in the past as they do today. The notion that social relationships are central to human culture is not new to archaeology, and attachment theory is, first and foremost, about social connection. Attachment theory provides a clear theoretical framework with which to understand how our social and emotional lives are intertwined, and can provide insights into how interpersonal relationships shape our cognition and actions.

There are also particular areas in which attachment theory may provide more depth to our interpretations of social life in archaeological contexts. It may, for example, be instrumental in further developing our understanding of the experience of childhood in the past. There has been a great deal of interesting archaeological research into childhood recently, bolstered by studies of hunter-gatherer childhood in the present (for example, Lew-Levy et al. 2020; Milks et al. 2021), but at no point do these studies consider the emotional significance of children and their role within past societies. Often, such studies are interested in the economic, cultural and social roles played by children (Milks et al. 2021), but they neglect to consider the

emotional ties that children would have had to those around them. In a recent paper, for example, which covers the archaeology of childhood in impressive detail (Milks et al. 2021), the nature of social relationships between adults and children are considered in entirely economic terms, such as teaching and learning, with no discussion of the emotional nature of these ties.

The attachment system originated as a way of understanding the relationships between infants and their caregivers, so it clearly has relevance here. It might, for example, help to shed light on Upper Palaeolithic sites at which children appear to be buried in unique or unusual ways, such as at Sunghir (Trinkaus and Buzhilova 2018) or at La Madeleine (Vanhaeren and D'Errico 2001). An attachment perspective alters how we think about the reasons that things happen; in this case, the interpretation becomes less about status and more about an attachment-induced response to grief. An elaborate burial, or the decision to dress a child in ornate clothing, could easily be understood as an emotional, attachment-based behaviour, as much as it could be understood as status-related.

An increased interest in the relationship between caregivers and children may focus our questions on childhood further, to stimulate discussion about how the socio-emotional connection between children and adults may have influenced the archaeological record. Given the attachment system's link to the caregiving behavioural system, we could consider in more detail the nature of caregiving, and how this may again be expressed in material culture or human remains. It might lead us to important questions surrounding how families dealt with the loss of a child, particularly in societies in which child mortality was very high. Including an attachment perspective in our analysis of sociality in the past reminds us that social relationships are inherently emotional. They are not just a means of survival, but are key to human life.

Pets and companion animals

Another kind of social relationship less often considered, even in contemporary psychology, is that of pets or companion animals. When we think of social relationships we often think of interpersonal relationships, but the vast majority of people would accept that humans can have significant social and emotional relationships with animals, too.

If we look at, for example, discussions of wolf domestication in the Upper Palaeolithic, the reasons given for domestication are often utilitarian, such as increased hunting productivity

(Clutton-Brock 2017, 13; Fiedel 2005; Shipman 2015; Shipman 2016), despite the fact that more detailed studies have cast doubt on the possibility that dogs or wolves improved hunting efficiency (Lupo 2017). Evidence such as the Bonn-Oberkassel dog, a puppy suffering from grave illnesses who died at around six months old, sheds a different light on the nature of this relationship (Janssens et al. 2018), hinting at a more emotional human-animal connection.

It may be helpful to consider ways in which we can look at relationships with animals in the past. We may wish to reassess the origins of the domestication of various species, and the cognitive and emotional effects of such a change upon people and the animals themselves. An attachment perspective on animals may provide unique insights into the role of certain animals in the past, helping us to understand the ways in which they were treated, for example by helping us to think about the social and emotional sides of domestication. More generally, such an approach recognises that our relationships with animals are often not simply utilitarian, but hold emotional weight and significance, too.

Places

Another area in which attachment theory may prove relevant is the study of place. The notion of place is important, as research has shown that particular places can be a focus for attachment (Hernández et al. 2007; Hidalgo and Hernández 2001; Scannell and Gifford 2017). There is no reason to believe that this was any different in the past, and ethnographic work such as that covered in Chapter 7 clearly demonstrates the significance of place as an attachment figure.

This may have wider significance for how we think about themes such as place and landscape in archaeology. An archaeology of landscape which incorporates an attachment perspective, for example, may shed light on how people engage socially with the physical landscape around them, which may help us to understand people's use of, or movement around, a particular area. This also fits into existing research on palaeoenvironments such the notion of 'landscape socialisation': networks of interactions between people which are mapped on to physical landscapes, causing particular features in the landscape to gain meaning and encouraging a sense of place (Langley 2013, 615). As Langley (2013, 616) notes, humans have an innate ability to attribute emotional value to parts of the world around us, which help us to bond with our environment. Langley's ideas about landscape socialisation are similar to

Fleisher and Norman's (2015, 9) notion of 'evocative space', albeit with an additional focus on the social, as well as emotional, meaning of space.

An attachment perspective can add further depth here, explaining exactly why such abilities are so effective, and helping us to understand what might cause this to happen and what effects this might have. It might, for instance, be worth pursuing further research into whether we can see examples of landscape socialisation in archaeological contexts in which humans were moving into, or had recently moved into, a new area. Landscape socialisation may well have provided a helpful way to maintain people's social and emotional needs for security, particularly at times of great change.

Attachment theory may also have something to add to heritage studies of space, in particular discussions of what place means in the present. There is, in both psychology and heritage practice, an understanding that places can mean different things to different people, and that people often form emotional bonds with familiar places, with positive effects on mental health and quality of life (Anton and Lawrence 2014, 451; Schofield et al. 2020, 7). Yet attachment theory has arguably not factored into many of these discussions, though it may prove instrumental in explaining why different people are differently attached to places, and hence why certain heritage sites might receive a great deal of support from local communities while others do not. It may pave the way, indeed, for heritage professionals to better understand the potential social and emotional resonance of particular places, including historic buildings or emotionally significant areas, and thus provide ideas for managing public needs related to the built environment, and how attachment to the landscape shapes people's engagement with it.

Again, an attachment perspective helps us to realise the active role of place in people's social and emotional lives, ensuring that we do not treat it as a passive agent, but as an active part of our lives. Thinking of place through the lens of attachment reminds us that place has an enduring power over us, and can shape our social and emotional lives in unique ways.

Religious beliefs

We might also consider how attachment theory might help archaeologists to think about the development of religious and spiritual belief systems. There is already psychological literature concerning the links between attachment and religion (Granqvist and Kirkpatrick 2016; Granqvist, Mikulincer and Shaver 2010; Kirkpatrick 1998), and this may provide some

interesting insights into the development of religion through time. Similar to the approach employed in this thesis, an attachment perspective on the archaeology of religion may help us to understand the development of particular belief systems through time, providing us with a better understanding of the reasons behind the development of religion or spirituality. In the context of the Upper Palaeolithic, for example, an attachment perspective may help to shed light on the origin of therianthropic forms in art and material culture, perhaps a result of a social and emotional need to connect oneself to the wider world, or to some kind of higher power. This may also provide insights into why religious belief is so powerful and long-lasting, giving us some indication as to the mechanisms behind some belief systems and the behavioural effects that they may have.

Attachment theory has real potential to shape our understanding of many aspects of the past, not only material culture. Future research should consider these many and varied areas, perhaps in the process developing a new area of research within archaeology: an archaeology of attachment. In doing so, archaeology may come to understand our social and emotional lives on a depth not seen heretofore.

Considering the therapeutic use of objects in psychological and psychiatric practice

Beyond archaeology, future research should also consider how the findings in this thesis may be of use in understanding how people today interact with objects.

Many of the findings within this thesis can be of use in developing our understanding of how object attachment functions, what causes it, and what effects it has in turn. We know that object attachment can actually be incredibly beneficial for the vast majority of people. This knowledge may help to counter the emphasis in the psychological literature on the psychopathological nature of extreme attachments to objects. These findings alone are not likely to change psychological practice, yet they add to a small but growing literature confirming the benefits of an emotional attachment to specific objects. Doctors, psychologists and other medical professionals clearly need to think about the role that objects may play in aiding mental health and wellbeing, particularly for those suffering from anxiety, or going through periods of intense stress. Objects have the potential to be of huge benefit to those using them, but these findings need to trickle down through to psychiatric practice.

Future research may help to support the findings from this thesis, and may allow us to concentrate on understanding the true prevalence of object attachment in modern populations. It would be worthwhile to consider whether further research, including longitudinal studies, may help us to understand how and when objects are at their most useful, as well as understanding the types of objects that are most useful and the nature of people's attachments to them. With further study, there is potential for an even better understanding of this capacity and how it works in practice.

Conclusion

Being emotionally attached to an object is not uncommon. In fact, it is actually surprisingly widespread among humans, and there is no reason to suggest that this has not always been the case. In this thesis, I have examined our capacity for object attachment in more detail, in order to understand when and why it happens, why it is important, and how this can be of relevance to archaeologists. In doing so, I have found that object attachment is a powerful, adaptive tool for combatting anxiety, change, and uncertainty. Attachment objects can and do take a range of forms, and many of these objects come, over time, to play the role of significant attachment figures, with the same social and emotional benefits as our relationships with our loved ones.

Understanding material culture from an attachment perspective helps us to understand how certain objects, both today and in the past, bolster our sense of security, with a myriad of personal and social benefits. For archaeology, this provides an entirely new perspective on the role of even mundane, everyday objects, recognising their social and emotional value, and demonstrating to us their intensely powerful (and often unexpected) abilities to make us feel better and connect us to others. I, personally, hope that the outcome of this research will be to make archaeologists think just a little more about how objects make us feel, and how important these feelings are.

Objects are important. An archaeological study of object attachment demonstrates the complexity of our relationship with the things around us, but it also provides a way of better understanding the development of humans' socio-emotional cognition. An archaeology of object attachment fully integrates material culture into our concept of the human mind, acknowledging its active role in shaping how we think and feel.

Norris may seem like a battered old teddy bear to anyone else, but as both I and this thesis can attest, he is far more important than that.

Appendix 1: Psychological data

This appendix contains the complete raw data for the three psychological studies undertaken as part of this thesis, as well as Information Sheets and Consent Forms for each study. The raw data for Studies 1 and 3 takes the form of spreadsheets, online links to which are included here. These links are open access, and putting these documents online ensures that this data operates within the FAIR Guiding Principles for data management (Wilkinson et al. 2016), ensuring that it is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

Study 1

This study was carried out online using Qualtrics (for further details, see Chapter 5).

Transcript of information sheet and consent form

What is this survey about?

This survey forms part of a wider multidisciplinary study into the emotional importance of our cherished possessions. We are looking to collect stories from people from York and across the world about what certain things mean to them and how objects have helped them through difficult times in their life. The anonymous results of this survey will be used in future research papers and as part of a project combining expertise from Archaeology, Philosophy and Health Sciences which aims to better understand how objects provide us with comfort in difficult times.

What questions will we ask?

We will ask some general questions about you (which are completely anonymous) and about a about particular object which has meaning or significance to you or has comforted you at a difficult time.

What do you need to know?

You must be aged 18 years or older to take part in this survey. Any information you provide is anonymous and stored securely in accordance with University guidelines. We will ask for your consent for the information you provide to be used as part of a wider project which could include appearing in published work in anonymous form. If, after beginning the survey, you

decide you don't want to complete it, you can exit at any time, and you should not feel the need to answer any questions which make you feel uncomfortable. If, after taking the survey, you feel you would like to remove yourself and your answers from this study, please email Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk). The final date for withdrawal is the 31st October 2017. If you have any further questions about this survey, please email Taryn Bell (email above) or Penny Spikins (penny.spikins@york.ac.uk).

How can I find out more?

To find out more about our research go to <https://site.google.com/york.ac.uk/comfortingthings.home>. We're also releasing a podcast series! To listen, go to <https://soundcloud.com/the-story-of-things>.

Before you start this survey, you must confirm that:

☐ I am aged 18 or over, and I have read the above and acknowledge that the information I provide may be anonymously used as part of a York Festival of Ideas project and in future publications.

Survey questions

Q1 What is your age?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- 65-74 (6)
- 75+ (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

Q2 With which gender identity do you most identify?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Transgender female (3)

- Transgender male (4)
- Gender variant/non-conforming (5)
- Not listed (6) _____
- Prefer not to say (7)

Q3 How often do cherished or familiar objects provide comfort for you in times of stress?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q4 Sometimes objects can be comforting and help us through difficult times. But objects might also hold other kinds of particular meaning or significance for us. For example, they might give us feelings or comfort or security, or we may be sad if we lose them.

To what extent do significant objects in your life carry particular meaning for you?

- Always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- About half the time (3)
- Sometimes (4)
- Never (5)

Q5 We'd like you to tell us about an object which is important to you. What is the object (please describe as clearly as you can)?

Q6 Please describe how and why this object comforts you or holds a particularly special meaning for you.

Q7 Is there a special story about this object? Please explain this story.

Q8 Is the comfort or meaning you get from your object related to any of the following (tick as many as you like)?

<i>Is it sensory? (e.g. the way the object looks, feels, smells, etc.) (1)</i>	Touch	Taste	Smell	Sight	Sound
<i>Does it act as a reminder of... (2)</i>	A loved one	A familiar/happy event	Past good times	Your childhood	A safe base
<i>Is it about material/monetary value or a sign of success? (3)</i>	A sign of status	A reward	Success/previous triumph	Achievement	Power

Q9 If possible, please upload a photo of the object that you discussed above.

Q10 Are you happy for the picture above to be used in talks and publications by the researchers involved in this project?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about *close relationships in general*.

Q11 It helps to turn to people in times of need.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q12 I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q13 I talk things over with people.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q14 I find it easy to depend on others.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)

- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q15 I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q16 I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q17 I often worry that other people do not really care for me.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q18 I'm afraid that other people may abandon me.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q19 I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Q20 If you could rescue only one of your possessions from a disaster at home (e.g. a flood), which object would you choose to rescue, and why?

Q21 If you would like your responses to be mentioned in future events or publications under an anonymous ID (e.g. 'Sarah from York' or 'Richard123') please write one below.

Q22 Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your response will help us build up a picture of the relationship that people around York, and further afield, have with objects that are important to them.

All survey data will be anonymised before analysis and use. However, if you wish to withdraw your responses, please contact Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk) before 30th June 2017.

If you wish to keep up with the project, check out our website! We can be found at <https://sites.google.com/york.ac.uk/comfortingthings/home>, where we'll keep everyone updated with details of our Festival of Ideas event, publications and podcasts. You can also email us directly - direct all emails to Taryn Bell (email above) or Penny Spikins (penny.spikins@york.ac.uk).

Raw data

At the link below, there are 120 responses – this comprises every participant who answered both the attachment survey and the questions about a particular object. The data in this spreadsheet has been anonymised and the degree of attachment anxiety and avoidance has been calculated, but otherwise the data is unprocessed.

[Raw data: responses to questionnaire](#) can be found on Google Drive, and the full spreadsheet is also attached to this thesis.

Study 2

Information sheet



Interviewee Information Sheet

Interviewee number:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview, which forms part of my PhD research.

I am interested in gaining a better understanding of the relationship that people have with the objects around them. In this interview, I will ask a series of questions about an object that is of value to you. Please answer in as much detail as possible, and feel free to include any other important details about your object that you think are relevant. The data from this survey will be used to inform future research into this area.

I will record the interview using an audio recorder to let the interview flow more smoothly, though if you're not comfortable with this let me know.

This interview should last no longer than 15 minutes, though will likely only take about 10. Should you wish to stop the interview at anytime, tell me and I will stop it immediately without question. You don't need to give any reason for stopping the interview. If, after the interview, you would like to withdraw your interview, email me before 31st August 2019 and I will remove all of your data, including the audio recording, and all data associated with your interview will be safely destroyed.

If this experiment makes you uncomfortable in any way and you do not feel you can speak to me (TB), you can email my PhD supervisor, Dr Penny Spikins (penny.spikins@york.ac.uk) or the Chair of the Arts and Humanities Ethics Board, Dr Keith Allen (keith.allen@york.ac.uk).

GDPR disclaimer

This interview will not collect any data that could be used to identify you. If you mention any names or information that might make it possible to identify you, these will be anonymised prior to analysis. However, you will need to write your name on the consent form, in line with University guidelines. Your consent form will be stored securely and will only be available to the researcher, Taryn Bell. The information contained within this survey will be securely stored in a secure Google Drive folder accessible only by the researcher. If at any point you would like your data removed, please email Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk). You can read more about your data rights here: <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/your-info/generalprivacynotice/>.

If you have any questions or issues, email Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk). Alternatively if you have any questions or issues regarding the ethics of this study, please email the Chair of the Arts and Humanities Ethics Board at the University of York, Dr Keith Allen (keith.allen@york.ac.uk).

Consent form



Interviewee Consent Form

Interviewee number:

Date of interview: DD / MM / 2019

Please read the below statements. You must tick each box and sign your name at the bottom of the page in order to proceed with the interview.

- ☐ I am aged 18 or over.
- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet provided to me, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before 31st August without giving any reason.
- ☐ I consent to the interview recording and transcript being stored anonymously for up to ten years.
- ☐ I accept that this data may be analysed, included in a PhD dissertation in an anonymised form, and may also be included in future publications.

Optional

- ☐ I consent to my interview being recorded on an audio recorder.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Signature	Email Address

_____	_____	_____
Researcher Name	Signature	Email Address

Interview questions

The questions below were used as a general guide for conversation – however, they were not always necessary, as participants offered answers to multiple questions at a time when telling stories about their objects.

Think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you.

1. Describe the object for me.
 - Size
 - Shape
 - Weight
 - Material
2. Where did you get this object from? / How long have you had it for?
3. Why does this object have value for you?
4. Tell me about the background connected with this object and why it's important. Is there a story about it?
5. How does the object feel?
6. What do you do with this object?
7. How often do you use/wear/hold/touch this object? Are there particular times at which you use this object?
8. What's the most important part/thing/aspect about this object?
9. Where is this object now? Where do you usually keep it?
10. How would you feel if this object was lost or broken?
11. When I asked you to think about an object, did any others come to mind?
12. Do you consider yourself to be the kind of person who is attached to objects?

Transcript: Interview 1

Date: 02/08/2019

Length of interview: 16 minutes 12 seconds

Participants

I1: Interviewee 1

TB: Taryn Bell

All place names and names of individuals mentioned have been removed.

Transcript

TB: So I want you to think about an object which has a lot of value for you or means a lot to you. Doesn't necessarily have to be something you're emotionally attached to, it's just something that is important.

I1: Okay (pauses)

TB: People construe importance in different ways, so it's entirely - maybe just think of the first thing that came to mind.

I1: Okay.

TB: Have you got something -

I1: Yes.

TB: Okay. Why does this object have value for you?

I1: Do I tell you what it is?

TB: You can do, yeah!

I1: The first thing that popped into my head was my engagement ring, and obviously the importance of that for me is the meaning behind it - but not only the meaning behind it, the fact that I've had it for so very long, it almost takes on a different meaning over time.

TB: Okay. So when you say it takes on a different meaning over time...

I1: It's sort of the permanence of something. So, when you first get something it's because something like jewellery, it's because you like it and it's special and everything else. But over time, it's almost like it represents the permanence of our relationship. Does that make sense?

TB: Yes, yes. So if I was to say why it has value for you, then you would say it's the length of time you've had it.

I1: Yes.

TB: Okay. So the next question is, tell me the background behind this object and why it's important. Do you have a particular story about it or is there a particular event associated with this?

I1: I think I didn't realise how much it did mean to me until it was damaged and I had to ask for it to be repaired, and I said to the lady at the shop, "I want it looking exactly the same, I just want a repair done. If you can't, leave it as it is and I'll put it in a box or something special and get a new one." and she said "No, I completely understand." and when I went to pick it up six weeks later, the man had just put the stones in a different setting. And when I said to him "What have you done to my ring?" he said "I've made it look better." and that wasn't his decision to make. That ring held importance, sentimental importance to me and I didn't wear it for about 18 months, I couldn't stand to have it near me because it just felt wrong and then I realised I was probably never going to wear it at that stage so I just tried to get over it but I've never felt quite the same about it. It's as if someone has damaged something special to you that they had no right to touch. And I would genuinely rather have got it back damaged and stuck it in a box where I could have looked at it as it was. It wasn't his responsibility or his right to make it look 'better', according to him.

TB: Okay.

I1: I still have an awful lot of anger there! *[laughs]*

TB: Okay, so can you describe the object in as much detail as possible? The size, the shape, the weight, the material.

I1: Okay, it's a gold and platinum ring. It was a J when I got it and I think I've had it resized up once since. It's got a thin gold band, and the sapphire in the middle is a cornflower blue sapphire with an oval shape to it, and it's got claws holding it all in all around, and then there's 8 small diamonds around the outside and they've all got claws holding them in.

TB: And how does it - is it a light ring, or a heavy ring?

I1: It's a light ring, it's a fairly what I could call 'neat' ring. I'm not into chunky...

TB: And how would you say the object feels? Maybe the feel against your skin or when you hold it in your hand.

I1: Um...I don't ever hold it. What I do do is, most of the time I suppose it's like anything else that you wear every day or most days, um, you hardly ever notice it's there, but I've noticed, um, I do tend to fiddle with it if I'm stressed or worried about something, then I just run my finger over the stone in the centre, then down the sides of the claws *[laughs]*, and then I sort of start by rubbing the top and round the sides and then with my thumb I'll rub the underside - it's no wonder it wore away. Yeah, it's just a comfort without it - I wouldn't say it's something that I turn to to comfort me, but it's something that I have noticed that I will play with, in situations that I'm uncomfortable with.

TB: So you said it wore away - so how did it wear - where was it that it wore away?

I1: On the top of my finger, on the underside, we were sitting in the - actually I remember, we were sitting in the cinema, and all of a sudden I thought "that hurt" and I thought something had got under my ring, but when I took it off and had a good look at it, it had actually worn away underneath just through years of wear.

TB: Oh, okay.

I1: So because it was platinum, it was a really soft gold, um, or soft metal, and it had worn away.

TB: Oh okay. It's interesting that it did wear away over time, I didn't realise rings could do that!

I1: Neither did I!

TB: So how often do you use or touch or wear this object?

I1: I tend to wear it every day, unless I'm on holiday or doing, um, things where - because it's, because there's claws holding the, the stones in, and when they had it reset a couple of the stones actually fell out, because he'd put it back in badly, and in fact the stone at the centre was set skew-whiff, so [my husband] took it back and, you know, got them to redo it, and a couple of weeks later one of the diamonds fell out, and luckily I managed to get hold of it - and I can't remember what I was doing - but it came out and I took it to another jewellers and they reset it for me. So if I'm doing something where I think the ring might be damaged, I take it off, it's, you know, I don't like the thought of damaging it any further. But I would love to have it reset as it was.

TB: Yeah. I guess it's difficult when...when it's already been done once, I guess there's that worry, isn't there?

I1: Mm.

TB: So you've already said there are particular times where you use this object, that you'll kind of touch it at specific times. But where is the object now? Because I can see that you're not wearing it right now.

I1: It's next to my bed.

TB: Okay. And is that where you always leave it?

I1: Yes.

TB: Okay. And where would you say where it usually is? Is it usually on your hand or usually by the bed?

I1: 9 times out of 10 it's on my hand. I do usually take all my rings off at night, because I get eczema on my hands and I find that if I keep my rings on, it gets worse and rubs. So someone advised me to take all my jewellery off at night, which I do do. And then in the morning I'll shove it back on again. Um, but I have a particular order for my rings as well, and I-I do notice, even by feel, if I've got them in the wrong order. So, you know, I'm just used to a certain feel, when they're there. But if I'm not wearing it then it's next to my bed.

TB: So what would you say is - this might be difficult to answer - what would you say is the most important part of the object?

I1: I don't think the object itself, in some ways, is the important part, it's the meaning behind it that's important to me. I mean, yes, I love the stones - the setting, is something else - but the stones and the colour of the sapphire and everything else, but it's the meaning behind it that is the most important to me.

TB: Yeah, okay. So this an easy question: where did you get the object from?

I1: I got it from a small manufacturing jewellers in [street name], I think it was, in [city name].

TB: Okay. How would you - I guess this is funny that this is a - how would you feel if the object were lost or broken?

I1: Oh, I was heart- I know exactly how I would feel because I was heartbroken. And I remember coming home, because I'd gone to town on my own to pick it up, and I came through the door, and I remember saying to the man "That's not my ring." and he said "No, I've made it look better than yours." and I said "But I don't like it." and he said "Don't worry, you'll get used to it, everybody does." which is, for a sentimental piece of jewellery, you know, getting used to it is not what you want. And I remember driving home in floods of tears [laughs] - all over a ring! I remember driving home in floods of tears and [my husband] saying "What are we going to do?" because we'd paid a fortune to have it reset, and obviously what he'd done was got a, some sort of standard setting that must have been manufactured somewhere else, and just placed all my stones in it. Um, and it was horrible. And to this today, it doesn't look right, it doesn't sit right. The setting's too big for the stones, it looks slightly out of place, so whereas before I had a ring that was made at a manufacturing jeweller's and was set all around the stones, and it was so pretty and so neat and tidy, and he thought that because he'd put this blingy thing underneath it, I should be grateful and it looks better. But, it has tarnished it in a way, in a big way I think, um...if it got lost or stolen now, or if I broke it now...I'm not as emotionally attached to it as I was before. So, quite what I would do I don't know. I probably wouldn't get a new one. Because you can't replace that, you know, once that feeling's gone and once that - I'll never have that attachment to that ring again, which is awful really. And it's, it's really sad I think, that it took somebody else damaging it for me to realise just quite how much it did mean to me.

TB: Fair enough! Thank you for telling me about it.

I1: That's quite alright!

TB: So when I said at the start, you know, to think of an object, were there any other objects which came to mind?

I1: My car!

TB: Really?

I1: Yeah! That car was the first one I had that was new to me. Um, and I remember it had 3 miles on the clock and [my daughters] were small and wanted to come home with me and [my husband] said "No, let Mum drive it first herself.". Because, what, 2003, [my eldest daughter] would have been about 8, and [my daughters] were dying to get in it, the pair of

[them], and I drove it home on my own, it had 3 miles on the clock, and, um, I just felt like that gave me my independence. But again, that's been a nightmare over the years, with all the problems we had with it, but that's just my independence.

TB: So how would you feel, so obviously you've had the car for over 15 years now, obviously I assume with 15 years it's starting to be an old car, how would you feel about the chance that you're going to have to get a different car in future?

I1: [My husband's] already said I'm not allowed to get a new car.

TB: But getting a different car? How do you feel about the prospect of having to give that car away?

I1: I don't know, because I've almost made - she's got a name, um...if, um *[laughs]* this is going to sound ridiculous, if she does something that I think is good, like it's a cold morning and she starts first time, I'll rub the, rub the top and say "Oh, well done!" *[both laugh]* So I do talk to her! I don't know. I'm incredibly fond of her and I'm incredibly pleased that [my eldest daughter] is able to drive her because to me [she's] almost got a sense of independence through her as well, so...yeah...I don't think, I'm not one of those people who gets overly attached to their car, you know, some people get so attached to their cars, um, although I don't know how many more people name them and, you know...but she's mine, she gives me my freedom. I hate - I think I would be okay, say for instance, I won the lottery and I could afford to get a new car and pass her onto [my eldest daughter], I think I'd be happy with that. If I thought she was going to the scrapheap, I'd be horrified. Which is probably going to happen, considering how old she is! But, um, yeah...

TB: So, the questions I asked, did anything else come to mind? Did it make you think anything about the relationship you have with objects?

I1: I always thought I wasn't terribly attached to things. But I'm one of those people who, especially if people give me things, and [my husband] bought that car for me, um, the same way he bought the ring for me I suppose, I would say that I'm not attached to things, but I cannot throw anything away if someone gives it to me. You know, even if I don't like it, if someone gives me a present, um, you know, all the stuff that we packed away when my Mum died, I mean that's 10 years ago now and I'm just starting to let some of the stuff go - I've probably not looked at it for the 10 years, but I couldn't throw that away...and that's really

difficult because it feels to me like you're throwing part of that person away, and another thing I really do have difficulty getting rid of is photographs. Now obviously you lot take digital photographs and they're different, but they were very physical things when we were growing up and, um, whereas you'll snap snap snap and muck about and happily delete 50 photos and all the rest of it, with us, because it cost a lot of money and you had to send the films away, and what have you, a lot more thought went into taking photos, so I've still got photos that are absolutely awful, from when [my daughters] were little, of them running out the room and they're all being blurry, or looking in the other direction and their eyes going blood red - there was this thing called red-eye when, in the cameras - but for some reason, I can't, I can't destroy them, so I've got bags and bags of photos which are of no use to anybody, and never will be, but I can't...[my daughters] will have to have a bonfire without me *[both laugh]*.

TB: Thank you so much for answering all of my questions, I really appreciate it.

Transcript: Interview 2

Date: 05/08/2019

Length of interview: 19 minutes 35 seconds

Interview 2

TB: Taryn Bell

I2: Interviewee 2

Transcript

I2: Items that may be important to you can sometimes come out like, I find my tablets quite important, just for keeping - I don't live by the phone, but I can keep my tablet, I keep my tablet a lot.

TB: Yeah.

I2: And, uh, it would be very, very important to me in the fact that it keeps me in contact with a lot of people, and through - I'm not a big social media person with the exception of Twitter, but that's mainly to keep me in contact with people that I know have similar interests, and I go from there.

TB: So when I said “an object which was important to you”, was that the first thing that came to mind?

I2: Uh, well, it's difficult because the things that are important to me are not inanimate objects. My wife is extremely important to me, my cats are extremely important to me, so is my son and my grandchildren, but I didn't think you would want children included in that. They're more important to me than any inanimate object I have. Inanimate objects can be replaced, they [objects] can't.

TB: That's very interesting actually, because that's a lot of what my research is about – our relationships with people. So when I said “an important object”, what the first thing you could think of that you could – you would class as an important object to you?

I2: If it had to be an inanimate object, it would be probably my wedding ring. It's already with me, it never comes – well, the only time it's actually came off was, uh, when I was having problems with my finger, having an operation, so that was about it. But, uh, in the years that I've been married - my wife and I have been, not married, but together for about 30 years now, and she's extremely important to me, and the other members of my family are. Although I have brothers and sisters I don't get on with them, I don't see my parents, so I've made my own family and my friends.

TB: And is that part of what the ring represents for you?

I2: Yes! Yes, it's a contact with them that, you know, I've always got it with me, and, uh, I'll probably die with it on [laughs].

TB: So I notice you're twisting it round on your finger – do you find that you do that a lot?

I2: No, it's only if I think, you know sometimes it just needs to be moved because it's stuck [laughs] and you just do it like that because it cleans the inside of it, and that's about it. No, I have, I'm a bit of a hoarder, and I have so many different things that it's nigh on impossible to choose one thing that you could say. Uh, my interests change, some remain with you throughout your life, but interests like, uh, I paint, I work in mixed media, I also paint photographs, so although the camera could be classed as an object that I value a lot, you know, is it the camera I used now or is it the one I used in the 80s, is it the one I used in the 70s, is it just a camera? [laughs] So, it – it's not one in particular. If you're looking for items that have been with me, probably one item that been with me for more than anything would be,

uh, my medal from the Forces, and that's been with me since the 70s. So, that's quite a while ago! In fact, I was looking through a list of movies, and one came up about Northern Ireland, and the subtitle or the subheading on it was 'a historical movie about the troubles in Northern Ireland' – it wasn't even bloody historical, I was there! [laughs] I'm not that old! So, you know, things like that, having so many different interests – I'm also interested in ceramics, we have a collection of prints and pictures, uh, we also have a lot of ceramics, I also metal detect so I have a lot of pieces that I have dug up which could be classed as valuable, but that's not why I have them. I have them because it's just – we're holding onto them and passing them down as we go through.

TB: Absolutely.

I2: And, uh, that's mainly – the main reason for holding onto things is so you can pass them on to someone else.

TB: So would you say that that is – because you describe yourself as a bit of a hoarder, so you – you keep these objects because you want to pass them on?

I2: Most of the stuff that I've kept, there is a reason for passing it on. I'm also very interested in music and, uh, I have done various projects in the music industry. So, stuff coming from that which is relatively rare in itself. My son is interested in similar music, and his son is interested in similar music, so it will go down the line, to my grandson who could name all 4 Beatles before he was 3! [laughs] I know students that couldn't do that!

TB: So it sounds like you have quite a...quite a mixture of objects, in your life.

I2: Yes, well, it's – life is a mixture of everything, and it's just a matter of getting together with things that you enjoy. I, uh, I have people that say to me, how do you find time to do all these things, you're always doing something different. No, I'm just doing what I enjoy, and you know, just because it happens to be a different subject doesn't mean to say that I don't enjoy it, and that's the main thing that comes under. I enjoy walking field- I enjoy fieldwalking, I enjoy art, I enjoy music, and so on. They all stem from what I enjoy. So a lot of it comes from what I enjoy. Now, some things have to move aside, mainly from a space point of view, uh, also interested in military history but I was running out of space for books etc. so military history had to go, and art and photography had to come in, so one goes and one comes in. And, you know, probably if anything that you really feel good about keeping is books, you know there is so

much in books – I also like winding people up – people will say – I went into one bookshop and she says “Oh, this is a great read” and handed me a book about the artists in St Ives, and I said “I don’t actually read them, I just look at the pictures” and she looked at me! And that’s all I do – read. In a lot of the cases, I look at the pictures because with art, that’s what I want to see, I don’t want to read how they made it, or what type of paint they used, I want to see.

TB: So the visuals are more important?

I2: Yes. And that’s it!

TB: Interesting.

I2: But, uh, it’s as to whether these items will stand the test of time or not, because some of them will get passed down. I get given things and put them away in a box somewhere, you know, that’ll go to someone that – you know, I commented to my wife who has got a rather large collection of jewellery, that has been bought for her or she has bought over the years, that she had better hope that our granddaughter actually has the same taste in jewellery, and she says “No, she won’t be getting it all because there’s too much for any one person.” But why has she got it then? [laughs] But that’s it, you know...you think, things turn up, my wife’s parents gave me a box of coins just because her father used to sit and “just get them out!” so they’re now sitting in the house. So I’ll sort them out and bag them and they’ll go to my grandkids when they’re older. They may sit about forever.

TB: Are there any – is there, is there an object in particular that you would really be, frustrated, if it wasn’t passed on or if, for example, after you died...

I2: No, no, not at all, not at all. It’ll be left in other people’s hands, I’ll be very, very lazy about it and say “right, you can sort it out”. No, it’s, I really don’t think that I’m going to be dead and worried about who got what or, you know, “I wish I’d finished that painting”. I think they will be slightly immaterial to what I’m thinking about then, if thinking at all! And it’s a matter of...you die, that’s it! It’d be nice if – probably more worry wondering about the people that are being left behind, rather than the objects being left behind. You know, it would be nice for, say, for instance, a handful of Roman coins which could be shy of 2,000 years old, to carry on down the line and become 3,000 years old! That would be very – you know, “where did these come from?” “these came from my great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, who although not in the Roman army dug them up when they left.” Something along those

lines. But, it's just – enjoying life, it's great to have objects in it, but you don't always have to have them, and that's what I feel, with the archaeology stuff, it's lovely to go and see how other people lived, it's nice to pick up a piece of ceramic and say “yes, this was made for such-and-such...[recording too quiet for around 1 sec] and feel good about it. It's, I think, things like that, these objects that pass down, should be used more to incentivise people to actually look further into what they're about, be that in the way that I've done, although I liked ceramics, I didn't really collect them or know anything about them until I started picking up pot sherds, and then looking at it. And we now have quite a selection of ceramics at home, because I know how they're made, I know the different ways of making different things, and, uh, that incentivises me to learn more. Books make me learn more, I think that's better than just feeling that you've got to be taught everything. It's nice to go and use your brain to find things out for yourself.

TB: So when did you start metal detecting?

I2: 6 or 7 years ago.

TB: And was there a particular reason why you started?

I2: Well, someone that actually worked in here was retiring, and I knew he was interested in archaeology and I suggested that he took it up, and he didn't and I did! And I couldn't do it prior to that, I lived in the middle of [city] before I moved down here. Now I'm 100 yards away from a field where I can find everything from Roman...pre-Roman, to modern day. And, uh, I have a good relationship with various farmers and such like, and everything I found I still keep. I don't sell it, it's just a matter of “right, I've got that, I keep it”. Uh, one item, which is just a piece of lead, has actually been listed as of national importance.

TB: Oh really?

I2: So I'm quite chuffed with that. [laughs]

TB: Oh, so you've been to the Portable Antiquities Scheme?

I2: Yes, I've 2, going on 300 items listed. Some of it's rubbish but it gets – you take it as a sort of competition – there's more, take that into [PAS]. But I haven't been in to them for ages, I've got bits and pieces sitting around in the house which, the collection of stuff that I've got from that, it's nice to have and it's nice to see and, the first time you pull a Roman coin out of the

ground, that's very nice. My first Roman coin, I didn't actually realise was my second one, because the first was only a fragment and I didn't realise that's what it was until I started looking at other stuff. But, uh, it gets to the – sometimes you have a good week, there was a time I was off work so I had about 5 days I was actually out digging, and I was having quite a good time, I found something like 7 silver...over the period of 5 days, and I was joking with one of the archaeologists at, uh, YAT, that I was getting fed up finding bloody silver – he said “I wish we could find one!” [laughs] But, uh, it's a whole different ball game, some archaeologists don't like us, I wouldn't say don't like us because I don't know a single other metal detectorist, I don't go out in droves, it's just me. And, uh, I just enjoy it, it's nice to know what might have been there - what started me as well was, I was in an area where there was nothing really reported, of, between 3 towns or 3 villages, and there was an area there but I hadn't seen anything said about that and I decided that I wanted to prove that the Romans had been there at some point, and I have done!

TB: Oh, okay!

I2: They've had contact, with all various coins, brooches, ring, pins, etc., so it just piles up, this, sitting back in boxes at home, along with all the bits and pieces of ceramics - want some ceramics? I've got about 40 kilos of pot sherds [laughs].

TB: You could do your own exhibition at this rate!

I2: No, well, there was someone, who - he had put an ad in one of the magazines, and, saying “I've got all these pot sherds if anyone wants them” so I said “Oh, I'll come along and get them” and I went and got them from him, so that I could cherry-pick what I wanted from them. My collection has examples, and I know who these boxes are just - rubbish pot sherds, everything from Roman to medieval [laughs]. You can't throw them out!

TB: No, I guess - where would you throw them out?

I2: Well you see, I wanted to get rid of them, and we were having a new fence put in, and they were going to be cementing the post in for the fence so I thought - modern concrete, pour the stuff in, modern concrete, don't know what it was. Modern concrete, Roman sherds get encased in there, it wasn't going to put anyone on a false trail. But the guy that was coming to do the fence couldn't make it on the day that I was gonna be there so it never happened. So they're now still sitting in bloody boxes.

TB: So how does your wife feel about all of these?

I2: Oh! She doesn't bother. She doesn't bother. My wife is fantastic, she is. I used to work with a company that sold deactivated weapons - well, they sold live weapons as well but they sold deactivated ones, and I was going to one of the shows and it was the first show I was doing for them, and all the stuff was in the car and I said "well, I'm gonna bring it in so I can familiarise myself because there was some of them I'd never seen before, and I wanted to bring them in so I spread a big sheet on the sitting room floor and she went away for a shower, and she came down and opened the door and walked in and there were handguns and submachine guns and light machine guns and rifles, and she says "Look, you are putting these away before you go to bed, aren't you?" "Yeah." "Okay." *[laughs]* That was it. That's how bad it gets. But, uh, no, it's items as I was saying that - they may be tangible, you may be able to hold onto them, but, what's in your head or the sort of person you are is probably a better thing to pass on than some cash or something so I'd rather do that, and it's nice that my son has taken an interest in the sort of music I like, and uh a lot of the music I like I know the people that actually made the music so he's got to know them as well. And, uh, at some point, provided I live that long, his son might get to know them *[laughs]*, but uh he will at least know the music, and he was telling me recently, my son, he was at a friend's house and he was looking at the friend's CD collection, and he's got the same name as me, so he was looking at the friend's collection, pulls one out and says "You'll find my name in that - not my name but my father's name in that CD" "Will I?" "Oh yeah!" *[laughs]* because I had - it was me that did the project with EMI Records to release it, so, you know, things like that, and I'd rather leave that for them, and that works out nicer.

Transcript: Interview 3

Date: 06/08/2019

Length of interview: 12 minutes 32 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I3: Interviewee 3

Transcript:

TB: If I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you or which means a lot to you, is there an object which comes to mind?

I3: Yeah. There's 2 in particular. Can - should I just talk about 1?

TB: We can talk about both of them.

I3: Okay.

TB: I tell you what, why don't we do it - would you prefer to do them one by one, or would you prefer to talk about them both at the same time?

I3: Uhh...I guess it depends on the question. But maybe we'll go question by question?

TB: Good idea, yeah. So what I'd start - probably the easiest thing to do is describe the object or objects.

I3: Okay. Um, so the first one is my collection of journals. So I kept a lot of journals from the time I was around 7, to the time I was about 18. And those are irreplaceable to me. And they're the thing that whenever I - they're at my parents' house right now - but whenever I go to my parents' house, I check on them to make sure that they're, they're still okay *[laughs]*. Um, and then the other one is a wooden board that I got from a client when I was a commercial archaeologist in [country]. And, um, it was important enough for me to bring here, but to me that, that's kind of the, if I had to save one thing in my house here in the UK, that would be the thing I would save.

TB: Okay. So what, what size is the board?

I3: Uh, it's about, uh, 9 inches by about 24 to 36 inches. It's a cedar plank, actually, so it was from a, um, old mill from 100 years ago. It's a hand-split piece of wood but the, the, what's really important about it actually is that - so I did this survey on this old guy's property, and, um, while he was there, he was just staying in this old RV cuz he actually lived in eastern [state] but the survey was in western [state]. So he was living in an RV on the property and, um, he, in the evening, he had done - made this little inscription on it in copper wire that said 'Archie was here' or 'Can you dig it? Archie was here' and he was calling me Archie the whole time cuz I was the archaeologist. So, um, to me that became kind of a symbol of my old job, which was a really formative period in my life that was just a really important object for me.

TB: Okay, so what do you use it for now?

I3: It's just a display. It - it goes on my, um...what are those called? Not wardrobe, the - you guys have a weird word for it here. It's basically a cabinet.

TB: Like a drawer?

I3: Not a drawer. Anyway *[laughs]* it's a storage - thing *[laughs]*, it keeps my pots and pans, it's in my living room. Um, and anyway, it sits on top of that, so it's in kind of a prominent place of display in my living room slash kitchen.

TB: And the books - the journals, sorry - what sort of size are they?

I3: Oh, they vary all over. I think the first one was a Rugrats paper, like, just a paper spiral notebook, and some of them are just spiral notebooks, but they go through 18 years so there's probably about 20 of them of various different sizes, and they have things shoved in them as well. So some of them have, like, dried flowers, and some of them have, like, old love letters from old boyfriends – it's just kind of this representation of my life but obviously those are irreplaceable as well, um, and I don't go back and look at them ever, but I just have this...I don't know, it just records so much of who I am, and especially those teen years, I would hate for them to disappear.

TB: What do you think you'll do with them in future? Do you think you'll keep them at your parents', or do you think you'll -?

I3: I'd like to keep them with my, myself because I'm worried that they will get destroyed at my parents' house, but, um, I think I see them as sort of heirloom of some sort, I guess? Or...I – I, yeah, I guess I don't quite know what's gonna happen to them but I just like the fact that there's these kind of physical written things about, about my life.

TB: Because journals are quite interesting I think, because some people want them passed down to their kids, or, or, you know, family, other people say as soon as they die they want them burnt, that's it, they don't want anyone to read them.

I3: Ah. I wouldn't want them burnt, I kind of want them around, but I don't know if I – I don't think I would want people reading them while I'm still alive necessarily *[laughs]*. Um, so I don't know, I guess it – that might be the archaeologist in me, I just like having a physical record that's not a computer record of kind of what I was thinking. I mean, I think some of the things I probably said in there would be kind of embarrassing to me right now – my twelve-year-old thoughts. Um, yeah, I just – to me, they were...just growing up, I used to write in them almost every day and it was, just, a really great part of my day, um, cuz I got to think about stuff and actually if you write in journals every day, like, important stuff doesn't happen every day, a lot

of days are just, are just normal. But actually it was a really great process of reflection every day because you always have to come up with something to say, and a lot of times it might even just be observations of something I saw someone do that day, little funny stories or even just acts of kindness would go in there...just whatever I was thinking that day, big thoughts of the day.

TB: Do you still write in a journal today?

I3: No, I still have – I actually have one next to my desk, I haven't written in it probably in over a year. But, um, I can't remove it from my – like, I keep thinking I'm gonna write into it but I haven't been very good about writing in a journal since I got into university. My schedule just wasn't predictable enough, um, and I fell out of the habit. Ideally I'd love, I'd love to do that, cuz I feel like once I stopped, my life got actually interesting *[laughs]*. But, yeah, hopefully some day, I just need to sit down and write in the evening.

TB: Yeah. So going back to the wooden board, if you could pick one particular reason why that has value, what would that reason be?

I3: Um, I think, its – its value to me is more of a symbol, um, and it has lots of I guess layers to that symbolism, um, so the board itself is old, it's 100 years old, so it's actually kind of a piece of Washington history which was what I was doing my fieldwork in. Um, I think it's one of the few presents, in fact the only present I ever got from a client, so that made it important to me, it was like a symbol of a job well done, because being a commercial archaeologist can be such a thankless job sometimes, you're always seen as that extra expenditure that no one ever wants, so it was really nice to feel appreciated and to see that, actually, I did do a pretty job at that old job, um, and I think also it's just my – that part of my life was really the first time I felt kinda like a fully-functioning adult, I made money, you know, I had – I even made savings, um, it was the first time I was really a professional archaeologist and so although I wouldn't go back to that job I will probably always look at that job as something that was really an important part of my life.

TB: Oh, that's really interesting *[both laugh]*. No, it is! Um, so, do you, do you ever sort of touch the board or use it at all?

I3: Not really, it just sits there mostly, um, I adjust it sometimes because sometimes it slides down and it's at the wrong angle so I put it, I put it back up, but yeah so it's kinda like anything

you do to have – that you display. A lot of the stuff on my walls all over my house is stuff, like pictures that I've taken or objects that I've collected at various archaeological sites and stuff so, a lot of them have kind of, these meanings and symbols to me, but um, but yeah, that one in particular is, is, I don't know, it has special importance for whatever reason I – sometimes it's hard to describe.

TB: So I guess, how would you – how would you feel if – I mean, you said that that board was the one thing that you'd save. How do you think you'd feel if it was lost or broken?

I3: I think I...well, I was actually thinking about it breaking the other day, because I was, I was thinking about how was I gonna get all this stuff back to [country name], and I remember packing that particular board and thinking about how I would pack it so it doesn't crack in half, because I would be really upset if, if it had broken. I think, it's, it's not something I would probably think about forever, that it had broken, but if I did find that it had broken I would be pretty upset about it. Um, so it is something that when I move back, I'm gonna have to think really carefully about how to pack it. It is nice and flat though *[laughs]* so that's nice and fits well into a suitcase. But is an old piece, brittle piece of wood so it is pretty delicate.

TB: So it's not covered in any varnish or anything?

I3: No, no. It's actually got little dribbles of paint on it, cuz I think it sat next to an old house for a really long time and someone just picked it up outside.

TB: So is it quite rough feeling then?

I3: Yeah, yeah. It's just a split cedar plank. Um, so cedar is a type of wood, it doesn't split very smoothly, it's not been sanded, it's literally just a piece of wood with some copper wire shoved into it.

TB: Um, so would you say generally, would you call yourself a person who is quite attached to objects?

I3: Um...that's actually a really interesting, kinda complicated question. So, um, I would say in general I don't like to collect a lot of stuff, my mom does that and I'm kind of resistant against that cuz I don't like a lot of clutter. Now the things in my house, um, I have kept – and part of this is cuz I move a lot, so I have to kind of condense everything down to the most important things. So the things I do have, really do have meaning to me. Um, so anything that I've got

on display, it's not just something I purchased – it's, well, it's usually not something I've purchased, it's often something that's got some sort of story behind it, and I put it up because I, I like the story behind it. Um, that's changed a bit since moving to the UK cuz I wasn't able to bring everything with me, so I couldn't bring all the stories with me. But I think my attachment to objects is an attachment to the stories that those objects symbolise.

TB: That's really cool. Would you say - so would you say – you'd say that moving, and becoming more mobile I guess, has forced you to make decisions about what objects –

I3: - Yeah -

TB: - are the important ones to keep?

I3: Yeah, definitely. Um, cuz you *[laughs]* – I was talking about this a couple of weeks ago so if you look at my pictures of my childhood bedroom, which stayed in place from the time I was 9 to the time I was 22, um, that thing is full of crap, like, it's just full and there are all these stories all over – I mean, so things would get put on shelves and then they would, they would get moved, and I knew exactly why I put them there, where I got those things, and so it was hard for me to, to get rid of those, but when we moved out of my childhood home, I did have to go through, I think I pulled like 6 garbage bags' worth of stuff I had to think "is this actually an important story to tell or is it not?". So I guess in a way I almost curate my life through what I keep and what I don't keep, um. So yeah a lot of the stories disappeared – I have, I have the photographic evidence though! *[laughs]* So I feel like that almost says something about my attachment to those objects, they don't have to be physical but I think it's the stories that they tell. So I took stories before I dismantled the room, and then, um, just kept the really important ones, the ones that meant the most to me.

Transcript: Interview 4

Date: 06/08/2019

Length of interview: 5 minutes 9 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I4: Interviewee 4

Transcript:

TB: So, um, if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value to you, or which a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I4: Uh, yes.

TB: So, can you picture that object in your mind and describe it for me?

I4: Uh, it is bear-shaped - it is a teddy bear. It is wearing Roman armour.

TB: Okay.

I4: And it's about 20cm high.

TB: Okay. Is it quite heavy or quite light?

I4: Very light.

TB: Very light. And how does it feel?

I4: Fluffy.

TB: Very fluffy.

I4: Yeah, apart from the spear.

TB: Of course. And where did you get this object from?

I4: I was given it by a - by an ex-partner.

TB: And does, does it have a name?

I4: Rex.

TB: Rex.

I4: Yes.

TB: Any reason in particular?

I4: It was on the label.

TB: Oh okay, so you didn't give it the name.

I4: No.

TB: Okay. Very cool. Um, why does this object have value for you?

I4: Um, it's sort of, got a lot of memories, uh, we took it on holidays a lot and things like that, so...it was a present, and then it kind of gained attachment through being taken places and there's lots of photos of it sat on a dashboard and, in a rucksack and things like that.

TB: So how big is it again, did you say?

I4: About 20cm tall.

TB: 20cm, okay. So do you use the object a lot at the moment?

I4: No, it's sat on a shelf, gathering dust.

TB: And is that shelf at home?

I4: Yeah.

TB: Okay. Um, so when you used to use it, you used to take it places with you, and make it pose for photos and things like that?

I4: Mhmm.

TB: Okay. Um, what would you say is the most - if you were to - this is probably a very general question but if you were to think of the most important part or aspect of this object, what is the most important part of it?

I4: I think the memories that go with it. Um, yeah, the sort of, it's sort of a memory of happier times and stuff like that.

TB: Yeah, okay. Would you say that you're, um, the kind of person who's attached to objects generally, or not?

I4: Um, depends. I've got like a small selection - like small collection of things that I would say I'm attached to and the rest of my belongings are a bit, more...I think I used to be a bit more...kleptomaniac almost? But I've realised that, moving house, I've almost started to clutter a lot and stuff like that so I've been thinning it down and, being less attached to things.

TB: Oh, that's really interesting. The - so, that bear, if it was lost or broken, cuz you say you don't use it as much anymore - do you still feel like you'd have an emotional reaction if it was lost or broken?

I4: Um, I think I would, um, because it was from an ex-partner, I think it would have been more of a loss having lost it if I was still with my partner, but, more from a sort of, it'd be a sadness that, like, it's a reminder of things, but maybe not quite as much as if I'd lost it a few years ago, say.

TB: Fair enough. Um, was there any particular reason you got the bear in the first place, or did it, was it just something you saw and you liked?

I4: It was a gift.

TB: Was there any particular reason that you were given it?

I4: Um, I think it was for an anniversary.

TB: Okay. Um, so when I asked you to think about an object, were there any other objects that came to mind?

I4: Um...I thought of things like my phone that are obviously very important to me on a - in terms of I use them - like, my phone's probably the object I use most in my daily life. Um, but, because it had less of that emotional attachment, I went for something that did.

TB: So how would you feel about your phone if that were lost or broken?

I4: Um, more annoyed I think, than upset, because it's a lot of hassle to have to, get all, get everything signed off and all that sort of thing.

TB: Um, so with your phone do you find that you tend to keep it close to you all the time, or...

I4: Yeah, it's on me most of the time.

TB: Most of time, yeah, yeah. So what would you say is the most important aspect of that?

I4: I think it's the communication, it's part of how I communicate with friends and other people a lot, so...it's sort of tying me into my wider life a lot of the time.

TB: Do you come from a - if you don't mind my asking, do you come from a family that tends to hold onto objects quite a lot?

I4: Yeah, my mum and dad have got a house full of stuff, so...

TB: And do you feel like that's affected how you think about objects?

I4: Yes, because I think having been through multiple tidy-ups in their house when they've been trying to get rid of stuff, I've realised that, now as an adult, I don't want to have to deal with that, so, that's why I sort of have a small collection of things that I'm attached to and the rest, less so.

TB: Yes, so you keep a smaller amount, but those that you keep are very important.

I4: Mhmm.

Transcript: Interview 5

Date: 06/08/2019

Length of interview: 11 minutes 59 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I5: Interviewee 5

Transcript:

TB: If I asked you to think about an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I5: Oh yes, yes. My first object is my very first archaeological trowel that I got in commercial archaeology.

TB: Okay.

I5: The reason why that's special for me is because that signified me from going from a student to professional - it's me starting my professional career. Um, and then it was also - this, this, this trowel, was almost like a tool for me to do my job, you know, to the highest of my abilities. Uh, so it wasn't, it wasn't, uh, just like a, like a computer where you just sit there typing spreadsheets out. This, this trowel did mean something for me, this...cuz I took it everywhere, every job I was on, I took it. And, um, it went through a lot of things, and it got run over by a machine! Unfortunately it did get - my original one did get lost, so I had to get another one, and of course the other trowel sort of formed the same attach - the same sort of attachment, it was, it was "Mmm, I wonder what I'm going to discover with this trowel?", what new discoveries and adventures are we going to have, what features are we going to uncover, with this sort of thing, with this trowel, because unlike other tools, it's, um, one you often quite use,

it's small enough for you to carry around everywhere. A shovel and a mattock you just use sparingly, um, but trowels are a lot more sort of kinda personal, it's the one tool on site I always dreaded losing and when I sort of lost it I would never feel comfortable until I found it again.

TB: Oh okay, okay. So what sort of what sort of size, if you were to measure it, what sort of size is it?

I5: Um, uhh...

TB: Because you said it was fairly small.

I5: The more I used it, the more it kind of shrunk. Um, it was metal, and it had a wooden handle, and on my earlier one I actually engraved my initials on it as well, so...

TB: And you didn't do that to the second one?

I5: I didn't, no.

TB: Any reason? Or just...

I5: No, no...why didn't I do it with the second one? It just never really occurred to me to be honest. It was, um, you know, I was still using - I did sort of maybe toy with the idea of doing it but, um, with the second one, um, and this sort of relates to my second object, why I started using it less and less, obviously as I started to emerge out of commercial archaeology and more into numismatics. And, in a certain sense, academia and museum work and consulting. So I didn't really, um, I didn't really use my trowel as much then and, then, as it, as it would now. I still, if I took it onto an archaeological site, yeah, I still feel attached to it, but it wouldn't, it's not that essential thing where I feel like I really have to personalise it like I did with my first one, where that went everywhere with me when I was literally in commercial archaeology full-time.

TB: Okay, so how did you feel when you lost the first one?

I5: I was a bit upset actually, because that was the one I had at uni, as well, um, because I used that in all my uni digs, and, um, obviously the first one got sort of run over by a, by a machine, destroyed then just lost in a massive, massive spoil - even a metal detector couldn't find it. So, um, so yeah, I was actually quite upset because it felt like, oh, I feel a little bit naked without

it - because I'd always either have it in my pocket, and it was just like, oh - something's - it just felt like something's missing.

TB: Okay, that's interesting. So how long - how long have you had the current trowel?

I5: Current trowel...would be probably be...I lost that one in, what, 2011? 2012? Yeah, it'd probably be - the current trowel would be probably about 7 years old.

TB: Oh okay, and how long did you have the other one for? The first one?

I5: First one was when I first started undergrad so that was 3 years at undergrad, then 3 years...about 6 years.

TB: Oh, okay.

I5: But I actually engraved it when I was still at uni with my initials.

TB: And what did you engrave it with?

I5: Just my initials [I5's initials].

TB: But what tool did you engrave it with?

I5: Oh, just used a knife.

TB: Ah, okay, okay. So the - I mean, do you use the trowel that much anymore, or...?

I5: No, only if I'm in commercial archaeology. Um, every time I go out, which I haven't done for a couple of years now, is I'll always take it with me, that's the very first tool I'll always take is, right, trowel, then of course there's all the other stuff like tape measures, measuring equipment, and all that. But the trowel is literally *the* [emphasized 'the'] tool.

TB: Yeah. So where is it now then?

I5: That's back home in [city name]. Got the trowel with my toolkit.

TB: Oh, okay, so it's - you haven't got it with you right now then?

I5: No, not in York, no.

TB: How do you think you would feel if - cuz you've already lost - well, you lost one before - how do you think you'd feel if you lost this trowel?

I5: Um, I don't think I'd - because obviously I've been out of commercial archaeology for a long time, um I don't think I'd - I mean, I'd be a bit annoyed that I lost it, but I don't think I would be particularly, walking around "Oh no, I feel there's something missing" like I did with my first one, because I was just using that first one all the time.

TB: So, for you, if you were to sum up that trowel, what would you say is the most important thing about it, or, or why does it have value to you?

I5: Um, cuz it represents my profession, it represents what I do. I mean, okay, archaeology is a blanket term for everything, but to me and that trowel it signifies "Look, I am an archaeologist, I am a field archaeologist, I'm going out there, I'm digging, I'm investigating, I'm doing the job to the best of - to the best of my abilities" and, um, it sort of gives me the identity to the members of the public rather than, rather than just looking, standing there in Hi-Viz with a shovel, or a mattock - I mean, that doesn't signify archaeologist to the general public, a trowel does.

TB: Oh, kay. So you said there was another object?

I5: Ohhh, yes, I bet you're going to know what this one is. It's a coin!

TB: Oh okay!

I5: It's a coin. Um, it's the very, very first coin that I, um, obviously the very first coin that I ever found was a Roman coin which I lost, or rather we threw away the same day. But the very, very first coin that I actually acquired was a medieval longcross penny of Edward I. And, so that's really - and I acquired that when I was about 10, 11? Got that as a present. It was just, uh, from an antique shop.

TB: Okay, so if you were to describe the size, the shape, the weight...?

I5: Okay, the size would be roughly 18mm, the weight would be roughly probably 1.4g, and what was the other one?

TB: Um, the shape.

I5: Shape would be circular.

TB: So is it, um, because it's obviously it's Roman -

I5: It's medieval.

TB: Ah medieval.

I5: It wasn't 100% circular, it had a few chips and whatnot in, in, in the sides. It was, oh, probably about 95% circular with a little, little, sort of lumpy, lump.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. And what sort of metal is it made out of?

I5: Silver.

TB: Silver, silver, okay.

I5: Silver with 10 - with 8% alloy.

TB: Oh okay, so, so you've had that for many many years now?

I5: That was the very first coin I acquired and that's really what sort of kind of started piquing my interest in medieval coins.

TB: So when you say acquired, how did you get hold of it? Was it given to you?

I5: Yes it was, it was a birthday present from my aunt.

TB: Oh okay, and do you know how she got hold of it?

I5: Um, I assume she picked it up in an antique shop.

TB: Oh, okay, oh cool. So why does that object have value for you?

I5: Because, like the trowel, um, because I was always interested in coins, but like, that was sort of like represented, "wow, look at this, look at this object, what is this?". It was the mystery of this object, I mean, uh - 10, 11 years old, I knew it was a coin but I didn't know what it was, what made it this coin. And, what, what made it special. Um, I didn't, I didn't really know, um, but it was only when I was beginning to study these coins I thought, wow, this is, it's this particular class, this mint, y'know, all the, all the sort of technical side of, uh, of it, but I think to me, cuz not only was it a gift from my auntie, it was the very first one I got, and it sort of set me off on my numismatic journey if you will, and since then, I've acquired a lot lot more, normally through myself or just through other, other birthday presents, but that, that was the very first one, that was the very first medieval coin, genuine medieval coin I held in my hand.

TB: Okay. And where is that now?

I5: Actually, in York with me!

TB: Oh, okay! And where do you keep it? Do you keep it in drawer, or by the bed, or...?

I5: I keep, I actually keep it in a, in my coin folder which is just behind my bed.

TB: Oh, okay. So keeping it safe then?

I5: Yeah pretty much, that's, that's with the rest of my coin collection as well.

TB: Do you get it often and look at it or does it tend to, sort of, you only get it out occasionally?

I5: It's actually quite rare that I get it out to be honest, um obviously cuz I know, I know it's there. Sometimes if I get it out it's generally for practical purposes if I need to compare, compare it with something of that class...but I've got a lot of coins in the collection, but I always remember that one was the very first one that I got.

TB: Okay. That's really cool. So, how would you feel if this coin was lost or broken?

I5: I would be devastated, I would be really upset if that one, that one went. I think the same as any coin from my collection, if they got missing I'd be quite upset about it. Um, I think cuz that one, that one was special, it was the, it was the first one, as well, so...

TB: Would you, would you say you're the kind of person who is attached to objects, or not?

I5: Oh...that's a really good question. I'd like to think probably yes and no. Certain objects yes certainly because it doesn't represent, for me, it doesn't represent what the object is, it's, um, a bit like sort of Christmas and birthday presents. To me, it represents you actually gave them to you, like a grandparent who's no longer alive. "Oh, I got that from, I got that from my grandpa, that one, I got that book from my grandpa, oh he's not here any more." So it's not so much the object itself, it's the person that gave me the object that I attach meanings to it to. Obviously the trowel is different, because that represented my professional career, that was my professional identity, 'I'm an archaeologist, this is my trowel and this is what identifies me as an archaeologist.' rather than just a Hi-Viz, I'm just standing and watching a machine. This trowel identifies me as an archaeologist. And yes, I did a...I did a - because I was, sort of, that was my identity, that was part of my identity, my professional identity, whereas the coin represents not so much as my professional identity but what was much more personal in a way that this was my very, this was a gift from my auntie who sorta like kinda set me on a professional course to numismatics, rather than finding that Roman one with my Dad in the back garden because obviously I can't use that because we threw it away on the same day

because we thought it was a bit of junk *[laughs]*. So, but, I think if we kept that Roman coin, then that Roman coin would certainly represent, um, a very attached object, the very first one I found, while helping my Dad dig in the garden when I was just a wee boy.

Transcript: Interview 6

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 10 minutes 17 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I6: Interviewee 6

Transcript:

TB: I'll start by asking you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you. So does an object come to mind?

I6: Yes.

TB: Okay. Could you describe the object for me?

I6: The object is a rather strange-looking doll, uh, and it was made for me as a, as a baby, as a toddler, um, by a lady who, who we lived overseas and was a lady who was friends with the family. And it actually contains her own hair.

TB: Oh, okay.

I6: Which is...different. So it's a very - and it has moving arms, strings. But what it is, it's actually a very traditional tribal object, um, so it's very...personal, it's very unique, it was made with, you know, love for me. So it's a very important item.

TB: Okay, and does it have a name? Have you given it a name?

I6: You know, it doesn't have a name. Of all my dolls, um, it's the one that doesn't.

TB: Oh okay, is there any reason behind that?

I6: I - I don't play with it. It wasn't something that I played with, it was something I kept close but it wasn't something I, um, sort of dressed or anything like that.

TB: So what did it look like, what sort of size is it?

I6: It's about a foot tall, uhh, it's made out of wood and strings, um, but then it's dressed in - the lady who made it was actually from, um, a Bedouin tribe, so it's made from materials that are very traditional materials, the clothes, um, the hair was her, her own, um, it's got tiny jewels, jewellery, made for it.

TB: Oh okay. And is it - so if it's, if it's wood, is it quite heavy?

I6: No, when I say, it's kind of like wood sticks, imagine there's a stick for a body, there's two sticks *[gestures in air to denote doll's limbs]*...

TB: Oh, okay. So you've had it since you were very, very young.

I6: Yeah.

TB: Okay. Um, so, why is it that this doll in particular means a lot to you?

I6: I think it's, it's a) because it's been with me my whole life, um, I don't remember receiving it I was so young, so it's not something I remembered receiving. Um, and I think it's, as I say, I think it's because it was, knowing that it was made for me, and that it was handmade, the time and the effort that went into it.

TB: Okay. So where is it right now?

I6: It is, it's stored carefully in my house *[laughs]*.

TB: Do you look at it, or use it very often?

I6: Not very often, no, it's - but I'm always, I know where it is, and I know it's there.

TB: And did you use it a lot as a child?

I6: No, no, I didn't.

TB: So was it, when you were a child, where was it? Was it stored away?

I6: It was, no, it was one of those that, that was in the bedroom on a shelf so I could see it, um, but, well I didn't, but I do, I do play with it, but not to the extent the poor teddies that were worn out and fell to pieces, um, or dolls, you know, that ended up with strange haircuts and, it was a different relationship. And I think I knew, even very tiny, that they were different objects. Yeah.

TB: So you had teddies as well?

I6: Yes.

TB: And they were played with a lot?

I6: Yeah, yeah.

TB: Do you still have any of those teddies today?

I6: We've got everything!

TB: Oh have you?

I6: Yeah, we would just, we haven't thrown anything away. Um, for no good reason, to be honest, other than a bit of sentiment. But they're, they're stored in a garage and no one's looked at them for twenty years.

TB: Oh gosh! *[both laugh]* So, um, how would you say that the, um, the doll, how would you say it feels to touch? Is it quite soft or is it hard because of the wooden...?

I6: It's, well it's interesting cause the body and the head are covered in, although it's wood underneath, um, they're covered in a fabric, a stuffed fabric covering. So the head and body are soft, uh, and the arms are sticks so they're quite hard and the legs are sticks.

TB: Okay. Um, have there ever been particular times that you use this, that you use this doll?

I6: No, no, I don't.

TB: It's just generally there?

I6: Just generally there. I guess it's very much a comforting, it's almost like a comfort blanket, you just know it's there. Um, I mean I've got other stuff from being young like christening gifts and stuff, but I couldn't tell you anything about those, other than, I couldn't, I couldn't describe them to you in detail, other than they are in boxes and packed away.

TB: So it's interesting that you say it's like a comfort blanket but you also say you don't need to touch it so you get that comfort even though it's not there. How would you feel if the doll was lost or broken?

I6: I would be devastated, yeah. Because it's not the object, it's the, when I think of the doll I think of the people behind it, and the situation behind it.

TB: Okay.

I6: Um, yeah, I'd be devastated, I really would.

TB: And how about, um, do you think you'd feel differently about your teddies? Or do you think you'd feel devastated if they were lost as well?

I6: Um, I think as a, right now, as an adult, probably not, no, no. To be honest they probably should have been binned...no. Um, I think it's probably being part of a family as well where you have shared toys, and nobody wants to make that decision to bin things. Eventually they will go, I'm sure. Yeah.

TB: Okay. Would you say that you're, in general, the kind of person who is quite attached to objects?

I6: No I'm not, um, there's a few things that are very meaningful for me, and even though I've moved around the world a lot, they've come with me, but otherwise I'm really not, I'm really not. Um, I have a lot of hand-me-downs, um, so I'm not, really, I don't really like going out and buying stuff, so *[laughs]*...unless it breaks, something breaks or wears out.

TB: So, when I asked you at the start to think about an object that was important to you, did any others come to mind?

I6: A writing desk came to mind, that I own. But again, this is interesting, my, it was bought for my Dad as a 21st birthday present, so a long, long time ago, um, and again it's not a piece of furniture I particularly like the style, you know, per se, but there's something about the story of it, and the fact that it was, why it was purchased and how it came to be I guess, the story behind it, and the fact that it was looked after by my father for decades, and now it's in my care and I need to look after it. Um, as I say, it's one of those pieces that I'd be quite happy to put it in a room and shut the door *[laughs]* but it's not, it's not to my taste, but I appreciate it both as an object, um, cuz it is beautiful, it is handmade, you know it's beautifully made, um, there's also something about coming from a very working-class background, knowing how much that would have cost at the time, that was a big deal, um, and they'd really pulled out all the stops to, to buy this desk, especially in a family where my Dad was probably like the first generation to, um, do any kind of, not even university, any kind of what we'd call sixth-form kind of education, there's something about education being big, and desk, and something about that being really important.

TB: So do you use the desk or is it kind of -

I6: It's - it's almost unusable *[laughs]*! It's kind of like something out of, um, oh, you know, something out of, um, like an Edwardian TV show or something. It's actually quite fragile, and quite unstable, I'm not sure what you could possibly - how you could possibly work on it, it's nothing like this *[points to desk]*. Um, it's very delicate, so no, I don't - I use it to store stuff in, like I'll kind of, it's got one of those backs where you can, you can shove things in, so it's usually where things like payslips and bills end up. Um, but I don't use it for its, I don't use it to work at and I don't use it to write at *[laughs]*. It's just like a fancy storage box basically! Yeah.

TB: So is that the kind of thing you think you'll pass down?

I6: Well, this is going to be an issue because I don't actually have anyone to pass it to, so...um, ideally, yes, that would have, would have, um, happened, um...the problem is if you pass it in the wider family, it's which one do you choose? *[both laugh]*

TB: It's difficult!

I6: So it's a tough one, but I guess something I'll have to decide one day.

TB: And how about the doll? Do you think you'll try and pass that down to someone else?

I6: I don't know, maybe I'll take that doll with me. You know? I can't see that it has meaning for anyone else. And in fact it would probably look a bit, a bit rough, a bit ready, a bit strange, um, so I'm not sure that it would have a life beyond me, to be honest! Or that it would be of any, of any, mean anything to anyone.

TB: Oh, okay. So it's quite unique to you, then?

I6: Very, as I say it was made for me as a child.

Transcript: Interview 7

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 10 minutes 29 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I7: Interviewee 7

Transcript:

TB: If I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I7: Yes.

TB: Okay, could you describe this object?

I7: I can show it to you actually! Okay *[dictates to microphone while holding ring]*, I'm showing her a wedding ring, which is a, a gold ring, and this is not my ring, you can see it's too big for me, but this was my husband's ring, so...a simple gold wedding band kinda...bobbly and wavy.

TB: So is it, is it completely circular, or is it -

I7: It's, it is circular, but the top is a little bit formed, so it's kind of -

TB: Oh yeah, it's got a little bit of a wave to it.

I7: It does. That, so it's quite distinctive.

TB: Oh, that's really nice.

I7: Thank you.

TB: So, obviously you got this object from your husband?

I7: Well, sort of, and this is where, I'm sorry, your transcription is going to have trouble cuz it's a long-ish story, so, um, he was, uh, originally in the military, and then had gotten out of the military, and then after some time, um - and I'll shorten that bit of the story - he took a position as a [job] in [country] following the [war]. Um, and this was in 2003, and I told him to leave the ring behind, because both of us are notorious, we were very bad at losing rings, in fact this ring had been lost in my parents' kitchen for 2 years behind the, stove, behind the cooker, because he'd put it up there and it had fallen. So I said, just leave it behind. Um, ah, and he went in [date] and [six months later] he was, he was found to be missing. So, at that point, I rummaged through the drawer and pulled the ring out, and that's where, that's why I have it now.

TB: Oh, okay. So you've, you've had it on your own for about 10 years now then?

I7: Yep.

TB: Okay. So, did your husband wear it quite a lot?

I7: He did, except for *[laughs]* the periods where it was missing! He couldn't find it! We had a replacement one, so he was wearing a different one, you know, when he went missing.

TB: Oh, okay. So did he, um, the idea of having a replacement ring, was that - so, when he realised he'd lost it, did he say "Oh, we'd better get a replacement?" or did, did he think about, or...?

I7: Yeah, I mean, we just, we went to - we got a silver one because it was less expensive *[laughs]*, if we were going to have this being an ongoing issue, um, so it was just to have something on, and if you wear - as with any other jewellery, if you wear it habitually, you notice if it's not there and it becomes, it's almost like an irritant, for it not to be there, so that's why he had a replacement.

TB: So do you wear the object yourself, day to day?

I7: I do, although that's a complicated story. When he first went missing I didn't wear it on my finger as I wear it now, um, I wore it on - I decided to put it on a chain around my neck to have it close, but um, that looked a little bit like the One Ring from Lord of the Rings so *[both laugh]*, so I added another pendant on there, so that it would be - and it was an arbitrary pendant I just put on this, to slightly change the iconography that was involved in it. Um, I, the - the chain that I had it on, broke, a couple of years later, the catch just broke, and the ring was nearly lost, because I was walking and it fell, and at that point I decided to wear it on my finger and put my own ring over it. But in the years that have gone along, there's been, um, periods where I've taken the rings off, because the problem is that he's never - his death has never been resolved, whether or not he's dead has never been resolved, it's still an open investigation. So, my identity, am I married, am I a widow, all of that has been sort of in, sort of like Schrödinger's cat, it's in constant flux, and so, over the years, I've, this - it's such a - a ring like this is such a powerful statement, and it signals to other people as well, that there have been times when I've taken the rings off and as you can see, um, I lock it in place with my own wedding ring, so it doesn't slide off, there have been times when I've taken it off, to sort of, I don't know, as sort of part of the exploration of who I am and what that means, if that makes sense.

TB: So do you feel that you touch it quite a lot, besides having it on your hands?

I7: I do, it's a habit, I always did this, um, before I even wore it, just rubbing - I rub the inside of the ring with my thumb.

TB: And does that - do you do that at particular times?

I7: N-not that I - oh, that's a good question! I - it's such a habit that I don't think I can nail it down to a particular time. It's probably when I'm bored, or like thinking about something, that I probably do it.

TB: And if you don't mind my asking, does touching it make you feel better?

I7: I don't think it has - I don't think it has an active reaction, um, but I do know that when I don't wear them, like yesterday, after my shower - I took them off before my shower and then I forgot to get them off the ledge and put them back on, and all day, I knew that they weren't there, and I would go to, to rub them or, or you know, to do that whole thing, and it was annoying, but whether that's, again, because anything that's won habitually, um, it's not that I would rather think "oh god, I'm not properly memorialising him" or, you know *[laughs]* I'm failing to mourn appropriately or something. It was more, there's not this active object that's always part of what I do.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So what would you say is the most, if you could pick one aspect of the object, why it's important to you, to, to sum it up?

I7: Oh god! *[laughs]* Thanks, that's a good one Taryn! Um, I think that that's changed and shifted significantly over time. When I first began wearing it, it was, um, again, this is part of the very complex story, we were keeping it secret that he was missing, because of his prior history, um, and it was a personal way for me to recognise that and, also, because he was missing not dead, it was to create a link that, that was palpable, that was physicalised. Obviously over time that has shifted, um, and I think now perhaps the most important thing is that it is all of those things together. So that's it's, because it's, of its biography through those years, maybe that's the most important thing about it to me now? If that makes sense?

TB: Yeah, it makes sense, definitely. And I realise this is a very sensitive question so don't feel like you have to answer it -

I7: No, that's alright!

TB: Um, but if you, if this ring was lost or broken now, how would you feel?

I7: Actually, I can answer that directly because, um, a year and a half ago or so, um, I'd had some work-workmen in the flat, and I wasn't there, my landlady was there, and when I came back - I'd been away, overseas, and when I came back I couldn't find it. I'd forgotten to take it with me, and, and, I couldn't find it, and, so I had to go through that whole, like, thinking through 'I've lost it, what does that mean?', can- I mean I was looking in pawnshop windows and, and, and it was actually, I was, if you had asked me before that had happened I would have said "it's an object, it's a thing and things they, they break and they, they get lost" and I would have just, you know, said "well that was the period of time I had this" but it was much, much more traumatic and I had to go through a sort of mini mourning period for it, um, and, and, which was an interesting experience to go through, and then, like a month later, I found it again *[laughs]* which was sort of like "Oh. Oh.". But what was odd to me was, during that period, cuz I think of myself as a relatively rational person and I'm, you know like, I don't really believe in any afterlife or any, any kind of spirituality, has never been significant to me, how superstitious I am *[laughs]* around this object, and I'm aware of it, I'm not always aware of it, afterwards I'll look at it and go "Oh my God, I can't believe-" you know, just, it-it is totemic and it's very odd to say this.

TB: So you say you're superstitious about it, is it that you have to wear it at a certain time?

I7: Um, things like, um, I'll-I used to, I don't do it as much anymore, but when it was first, when it was very early on, I would hang significance on to it in certain ways. "If this happens when I'm wearing this in this way then it means this." And I knew at the time that I was doing that but I didn't always recognise that I was doing it. And it became a very - it's a soothing, comforting - it's a way of seizing control again, but because it was a - there was - a significant object to hang those on to, that made it feel more controlling and more real, it grounded those weird superstitions in a way.

TB: Oh, that's really interesting. So when I asked you to think of an object, did any others come to mind?

I7: Not - I mean, not in that same way, because this one is, because of the heightened significance, and, and, and that's, an event like that does sort of distort things. The other thing is that, um, sorry I keep having to tell long stories, I - because we were keeping it secret and there was a very important reason for that, it was, it took a month for the story to break, and then it broke big, because he was the first [nationality] contractor to go missing in [country].

So, uh, one day reporters showed up on my doorstep and the next day the entire neighbourhood was flooded with reporters. So - and we were preparing to move at that time - so when we moved, and we did it under enormous duress, so objects were just given away, thrown away, I mean, nothing mattered. The, the, the importance of objects just, it was gone, nothing mattered, we literally - it was just, it was like refugees, it was just like we were escaping. So I have a very strange relationship with other objects, they don't really, I like them, I love beautiful things, I love interesting things, but they don't have that, kind of, solid, grounded foundational importance.

TB: So would you say you're not really the type of person who's attached to objects?

I7: Yeah, I think so, which is ridiculous when you look at how many objects I have.

Transcript: Interview 8

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 12 minutes 19 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I8: Interviewee 8

Transcript:

TB: So, if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, is there a particular object which comes to mind?

I8: There's quite a few objects, but probably the easiest one to describe would be my typewriter.

TB: Okay, so what kind of - could you describe it for me?

I8: Yes. Uh, she is a Royal Quiet De Luxe 1940, uh so, matte black, compact, with chrome lines. She has the glass keys that actually dip in so they hug your fingers. Full-on mechanical, not electronic whatsoever, she types smoothly, she comes in a herring-bone leather carrying case, I actually brought her all the way over from [home country] which was a hassle to use as a carry-on, but she was worth it. And her name is Adelaide.

TB: Oh, okay! So what made you decide to give her a name?

I8: Well, uh, so as much as I like academic work I also do a lot of creative writing. And, creative writing is almost for me a spiritual process as much as an intellectual one. And when you put that kind of emphasis on an activity, it becomes important to you, the object becomes important to you, it's almost as if it has its own personification. And so, I guess in that sense that's why I gave her a name, so that she could be represented by it.

TB: So is there - if you don't mind me asking, is there any meaning behind the name Adelaide? Is that just a name you like?

I8: Uh, a couple things actually. Um, mostly a name I like, I really liked the sort of - for me, it's an old grandmotherly name. I had a previous typewriter named Elinor and I thought that was the perfect typewriter name, and I refuse to reuse names for anything so I had to come up with a new one, but Adelaide was actually the name of my grandmother's best friend and I grew up hearing lots of wonderful stories about Adelaide and my grandmother, uh, so, I kind of have a little bit of attachment to the name as well.

TB: Oh, okay, that's really cool. So how did you get Adelaide?

I8: Uh, I actually did a lot of research. My first typewriter, Elinor, was actually given to me as a gift. Uh, she was the same kind of typewriter a year earlier but not a Quiet, so she was very, very loud and I lived in an apartment complex so I needed something quieter, but I liked the vintage style, and so I did a lot of research and I actually got her on Etsy through a company that specialises in collecting and renovating typewriters and sewing machines. They'll take them entirely apart, clean the pieces, put them back together, and then they go through 15 rigorous hours of testing by 3 different technicians. And then they ship it out, as well.

TB: So how long have you had her for then?

I8: A few years now. I think I got Adelaide...2, 3 years ago?

TB: Okay. So you have a particular story - a particular story associated with Adelaide, or is it just more that you have this important relationship with her that's developed over time as you use her?

I8: More of an important relationship with her that's developed over time as I use her. I have a little set-up, not so much here as I don't have the space for it, but it's more like a writing shrine, a very specific desk, she sits on this desk. Actually, I have a story about her

predecessor. Uh, one of the reasons these kinds of typewriters are important to me, um, I had a hairless cat, he was mostly deaf, the other cat was terrified of the loud noise, the other typewriter made, but the hairless cat, since he was mostly deaf, was fascinated by the keys jumping back and forth hitting the page, and I couldn't get him to leave me alone when I'd write, so eventually to get him to stay off of it and let me type, I had to put his cat bed on my desk, I had to shift everything over and put him in the cat bed. And once every - he'd sit there and he'd watch it - and once every 20 minutes, he'd get up out of his cat bed, stick his nose in it and sniff around, and then step backwards, glaring at the typewriter and sit back down and watch patiently for another twenty minutes. Um, and I miss that cat so in general the typewriters - it's not quite the same one, but it's the predecessor.

TB: Yeah. So do you still have Elinor?

I8: No, I do not. I, uh, sold her cuz the, um, Adelaide was a little expensive since she was completely refurbished *[laughs]* so I needed to, I needed to be able to pay for that.

TB: Oh, okay. So how, um, how often do you use Adelaide?

I8: I used to use her regularly, since I've been here not very much. Uh, the last time I used her was to type up a Valentines Day gift for my partner.

TB: Oh, okay. So how does it feel to, to use her? Because you said that the keys are made of glass?

I8: Mhmm. It's a different tactile experience, definitely, from computers, for several reasons. One, of course, is the materiality of the keys, so the glass, the shape of the glass as well. Unlike Elinor the previous one, the glass was flat. With Adelaide, the glass is actually indented, so they hug your fingers more. It's also the typing angle with a typewriter like this, while she's compact so you're not going up here, you're still down here closer to the table, you have to have a very direct sense when you're pushing the keys, so you have to think about what you're doing more than with a keyboard, not just because you can't backspace - I can put correction tape on her, I don't like that, but also it slows down your typing speed, which I feel for me at least, helps me organise my thoughts, because I tend to think way too quickly.

TB: Okay.

I8: And so, when I'm doing creative writing, I'll have the typewriter and 2 notebooks, one on either side, I'll be editing one thing, typing another scene and then plotting out the next set of scenes, all at the same time, because the time it takes me with the typing, the forced slowdown, allows me to actually process where I'm going with the storyline.

TB: So how does it feel, using Adelaide?

I8: I feel like I'm in my own little world. It's - I really do feel like I'm in my own little world when I'm using Adelaide. Sometimes, when I don't have anything particular to type, if I'm not working on the story at the time, and I know I haven't used her for a while, you have to use, if you leave them out you have to use the typewriter, uh, so that the ink doesn't turn into glue with dust and the paper particles. And so, I'll put in a piece of paper and I'll type letters to her *[laughs]* or have, like, a one-sided conversation with my typewriter on the piece of paper.

TB: Oh okay, that sounds like fun. Um, so, you said it was quite low down, cuz I, I don't know much about typewriters, so is it quite a small typewriter compared to normal?

I8: Yes, she is a compact, so, uh, a lot of typewriters that are manual typewriters, tend to be big and bulky. She's very heavy, uh, very, very heavy, but her dimensions I'd say she's about 12 inches or maybe more like 10 or 11 inches by 13 or 14, and then the height of the base of the keyboard is only about an inch, inch and a half, and it goes up and then the widest spot is probably going to be, her top spot's probably going to be about another 8 inches.

TB: Okay. So I think it's quite interesting how even though she's quite heavy, you still brought her over with you, so that suggests that she's very important to you.

I8: Yes.

TB: And you keep her at home at the moment then?

I8: Yes.

TB: Okay. And where is she in your house? Is she on a desk? Is she on a shelf?

I8: She's on a desk. I'm living in student accommodation [accommodation name] right now so the structure of the flat, your desk, you have a sitting portion of the desk, but the desk actually continues all the way across the other wall at the foot of your bed.

TB: Okay.

I8: And so she's out of the way from my working space, but literally right next to it. So she's pushed back just a bit from the space where the foot of the bed meets with the desk, right directly below a poster, it's - and I've books on either side so she's kinda still set up in her own little...

TB: Oh, okay. So how do you think you'd feel if you lost or broke Adelaide?

I8: Pretty upset! *[laughs]* Pretty upset. Um...I try not to get too attached to material things, and I think she's something I could technically replace, but...the 1940s typewriters, also, there's only so many of them, let alone in such good condition. Um, and I've already developed a relationship with her, each- especially older typewriters, they're like old homes, they have personalities. Um, Elinor, for example, she punched holes through the paper with punctuation. If it was a period or comma, it was a very definite pause or break. Um, and Elinor runs so smoothly, I-I know her quirks with typing, so I can type with her quite well, I've had friends use her and they love it, but they have such difficulty working with her, because they haven't gotten that relationship. So I would be, I would be really upset. Uh, yeah.

TB: How did you feel when you had to sell Elinor?

I8: I was sad, but I chose to look at it as, she was given to me, and I was lucky enough to get her as a gift. She helped me along my way with my writing, and it was time for me to move on to a typewriter that I could actually use forever. And, I might - I didn't want to just toss her away and I would have loved to have given her away, but I couldn't afford to. I found someone who was really into writing, he was working on a biography - he was doing a biography, but it was on poetic forum, and I had him play with her for a while first, I didn't want her going to a home where she wasn't going to be used. And he messaged me, uh, quite a - weeks later, saying how much he loved her and how he uses her every day and how he's tried different types of paper with her, and all kinds of stuff. So, uh, it was bittersweet so, in the sense that I was moving on, I needed to progress to something nicer, but it was nice that I got to pass it on to someone else who wouldn't have had the chance, because they're not a dime a dozen.

TB: I can imagine. You said there were other objects that came to mind - what sort of objects came to mind when I said 'an object which has a lot of value'?

I8: Books. That's a very generalised one, books, but I am a bibliophile. I love books, and probably some of my most important books would be my, um, signed editions from Terry Pratchett.

TB: Okay. Well that's very cool! And how did it - did he sign them for you, or did someone give them to you?

I8: Someone gave them to me. I missed out on a chance to actually meet him in person, cuz my Mom was being cagey about some trip, she didn't tell me any details, and she was really upset when I was, going to Nevada to see my, for my anniversary with my long-term partner at the time, it was our 3-year, something like that, and she didn't say anything else. And I found out years later, that it was she was going to take me to a, a signing, he was going to be in Wisconsin, and I was really angry that she didn't tell me *[laughs]* as I would have dropped everything, including an anniversary trip, but he is now since deceased so I don't have that opportunity.

TB: Oh, okay. And um, is it, is it, um, was it books that you had already had, or was it new books that he signed?

I8: I already have all of his books, uh, they had gotten books ordered for me that were autographed, um, I actually have had several people gift autographed books of Terry Pratchett to me *[laughs]* as they all know how important he is. My tattoos are Terry Pratchett-based, so it's, uh... *[trails off]*.

Transcript: Interview 9

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 13 minutes 12 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I9: Interviewee 9

Transcript:

TB: If I asked you to think of an object which has a lot of value, or means a lot to you, or is important to you, does anything come to mind?

I9: Yup. The first thing that comes to mind is books. Books have always come, have always played a huge part in everything that I do, because, um, they've - they've sort of opened up worlds to me and that's really...allowed me to connect things, so yeah, books and things,

TB: Any particular type of books? Fiction, non-fiction?

I9: Not really! I quite like, I like a mix of all of them. Um, but I think it's just the fact that inside a book, there can be that little hidden nugget of information that just makes your mind go "Wow!" and just expands right out. And it can come from fiction or it can come from...and you just sort of go down a little path and create a new little world for yourself, and it just, sort of, it's there.

TB: It's a bit like escapism.

I9: Yeah, well it's very escapist, but it's also, as I say, it's that thing where you suddenly think "I never connected that to that until I read this sentence".

TB: So for you it seems like it's like a mixture of both escapism and education as well.

I9: Absolutely, it's, it's both together. Um, it started out as escapism, and then as I began to understand some of the books I was reading better and better then it became sort of "Oh, yes, *[makes hugging gesture]* I could hug myself into this little book" and the whole world outside can just disappear but, I can just sort of...

TB: Mhmm. So is there, is there a particular book, or set of books, that you, you feel is particularly meaningful?

I9: Um, not really. I mean, I-I've read...large varieties of books. I suppose for non-fiction it's always been history, it's always been, because that just helps to...find a place in the world and all that sort of thing. But for fiction books, um, no, I tend to sort of try and shy away and...just somewhere that has a really well-created world. I've read some really awful books *[laughs]* that I would never pick up again, and then there are sets of books, maybe that I'll go back to once or twice and reread. Um, but, I think it's because I grew up with stories being told all around me, and so when I got to read the stories they just... *[drifts off]*

TB: Cuz I noticed you've got a library book there, so how do you feel about, um, I guess there's a couple of things come to mind so a) ownership and also the movement towards digital books like Kindles.

I9: Um, digital books I don't have a lot of problem - I don't read digital books myself, I prefer the, the physical touch and smell and all of that helps it, but um, library books, all sort of books. The only thing I really don't like, or I didn't like until recently, and-and I don't mind it now, is people annotating books. When I was smaller, uh, younger, I-I really didn't like people-the book was supposed-but annotations are so useful that people have done. Some of them are utterly...fantastic. I mean, I've worked with a book in the Minster Library, um, one of the copies of *Eboracum*, Drake's history of York, which was published in seventeen hundred and something. And there is one of those which is so heavily annotated, by the various owners, and you can actually trace the owners by their - and so that gives you a little history of the book. But it's also got annotations like "This man is talking rubbish!" [laughs] And they've gone through and re-researched the stuff and annotated it into the corner or put little slips into it and various other things and that-that sort of just is an evolution of that object. And, that's what I've been - well, I've done projects on that, and it shows you the evolution, not just of the book, but of the knowledge that's held within it and how that's changed. There are some fantastic books within the University collections that have hundreds and hundreds of pages where they've been annotated, and people have put their signatures on as to which library they've been in, and...so you can, you can just trace these little bits and pieces all the way through, and it's fantastic. So, yeah, books are the things that -

TB: Books are the one [laughs].

I9: Yeah, that, that, they were, have always been around me. So, wherever I've been, there have been books.

TB: And how do you feel when you read a book?

I9: It depends on the book.

TB: Yeah.

I9: For instance, this one is just there to gain knowledge. Um, some textbooks I will read for fun, which my wife doesn't completely understand, that I will actually pick up a textbook, read it from page to page, and...then do largely the little note thing and stick a little note in it, rather than actually physically annotate it myself, I prefer to stick a little note in. But that, that way you get knowledge. But for fiction books it's just something to completely take you away, and that's what, that's the reason for reading, it just takes you completely away from, whatever

the problems are, I don't have to worry about the fact that the cooker's not working cuz I haven't changed the battery in it, and that this - I can just sort of float off and...

TB: Okay, so how often would you say you usually read?

I9: I read every day. Um, and I read for both reasons every day. It's just there to a) gain bits of knowledge, currently for the research that I'm doing at the moment for here, currently and then fiction stuff just to keep away from it, but I tend to read every day.

TB: Um, so how would you feel, or how would it affect you if, um, all the books were taken away and you couldn't read?

I9: That would be...hard for me. Because that means that my piece little of escapism...I would probably, there are other things that I do to escape, but that is my main form of escapism. I would probably find that I would spend more time playing computer games and things like that to escape but, but it's just that little bit of time, that this affords you, to be completely quiet, alone, not - and just, I find it relaxing, other people find it ughhhh.

TB: Is it, is there a kind of, do you feel then that there's a kind of comfort in reading?

I9: Absolutely. Th-there's an absolute comfort in reading. And it is, really, just that point in time where you can sit and not worry. Someone else is doing all the thinking for you, someone else is doing all the creation for you, all that sort of thing that - I mean, I'll read anything, I-I read cookbooks *[both laugh]*, I don't cook very well -

TB: Cover to cover?

I9: Yeah I do! You sort of have a look at how the recipes work and all sort of things like that, it's, it's all sort of bits like that so...yeah, it's just that sort of...imagination that someone else has got, that they're willing to give to you. And then hopefully something that I do might give something to someone else. I mean, it's-it's sort of that transfer of knowledge, the feeling of being part of a, part of a sort of wider and affected group of people, I mean if you pick up, let's say you pick up, uh, let's do a fiction book, uh, let's say you pick up Lord of the Rings, that's a great big epic, everybody's seen it on the movies, very few p-my wife won't read it, although she has-had a copy she's never read it, she'd rather watch the film, you know. Whereas I can sort of come in and then I can sort of go 'oh well', because I've done my - I did a degree in folklore and things, I can sort of say "Ah that's where he pinched that idea from" and that's

how he managed to do all these little pieces and things. But then it sends me to go and find out how he managed to get that, where did he get it from, and there's all sorts of connections, and things that, and...that's the sort of - I suppose the detective bit in me that sorta says I want to find out why he chose that bit *[laughs]*, why he chose that bit, why didn't he choose that?

TB: So have you got a fairly extensive collection of books at home, then, or -

I9: Uh, yeah, I have a fairly extensive collection of books at home. I suppose it runs to about...5 or 600 or something like that?

TB: Goodness. Do you rely much on libraries as well?

I9: I rely on the libraries, particularly here at York. I, for my research I rely a lot on libraries, but, um, for the degree that I did at Sheffield, the folklore degree, it was really odd because I didn't use a lot of books at all, I used a lot of newspapers and things like that and that sort of got me into a new sort of...so, yeah, I think it's probably rather than the physical book or anything else, it's probably the printed word. If you go right down to the very bottom of it probably that printed word, which is fantastic, it opened up knowledge to everybody, and I think a lot of people don't - take it for granted.

TB: No, absolutely. So when I asked you to think about an object which has a lot of value for you, was there anything else that came to mind or was it very clearly books?

I9: It was very clearly books, but then sort of thinking about other things I, I have at home, um, my grandfather's watch, which I-I occasionally wear, when I, when I'm more formal, and that sort of - so it's, yeah, that's another - it's another connection, sort of thing, it's this emotional connection to someone who was a, an ancestor or whatever, and I think that's something that you find with a lot of small objects, because they're portable and various other things, not just me but I think it brings comfort to a lot of people that they have an object that belonged to someone, it-it becomes that emotional - that emotional tie, that sticks with, with you and sort of, you know that the watch that's in your pocket and you're fiddling with is the same one that he fiddled with and so on and that sort of thing comes through it as well.

TB: And are those relationships, what do you think's most important, the, the, the history behind the relationship or, um, or the feeling that you have when you use it?

I9: I think it's the...both really, it's that sort of idea that there's a little bit of one of my ancestors supporting me when I'm doing it, and that's the sort of thing I think, um, as I say, a lot of these mementoes are for. I mean, I know my, uh, parents all have various tiny little bits that belong to various people, right the way back to my three, four times great-grandparents, there's little bits hidden away that are occasionally carried around as touchstones, if you like, rather than...but it's just that sort of thing, you look, it gives you a quick memory, and, yeah...

TB: So you don't always need to touch it?

I9: You don't always need to touch it, you can see it and go "Oh, yeah".

TB: Oh okay. So would you say that you're the kind of person who's attached to objects?

I9: Um...to certain objects. I find it very difficult to get rid of things. I am a person who is attached to things, um, but given a good reason I will give it - I will move it to somewhere else. Uh, if I can, I will move it to a similar collector, or a person who likes similar things. I'll sort of say "I've got a stack of books that I haven't used for a long time, where can I take them to?". Um, they have to go, rather than take them to a charity shop, let's see if I can take them to an independent bookshop, sell them so that they can sell them onto another collector and various other things like that. And, yeah, that sort of - so yeah. I would rather they would go to similar people - and of course, it's got my little name in the corner, and they can put their little name in the corner, and again it's that sort of...it's like I've got a small collection of books that, uh, were from, uh, a library of another folklorist, her name's always in them and I can sort of go, oh well, you can just...it's just a little history within a history, yeah.

Transcript: Interview 10

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 10 minutes 2 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I10: Interviewee 10

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value to you, or means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I10: Yes, actually, several. The first one, I suppose, is a set of Harry Potter books that my uncle gave me before he passed. He was a very quiet kind of guy, we didn't talk much, he didn't really care for children, and, uh, for my seventh birthday he started giving me the Harry Potter books and that was the one thing we sort of had in common.

TB: Mhmm.

I10: And he had all of them, you know, signed and named with all his notes and he gave me those before he passed away.

TB: Okay, so you've had those for quite a while now then?

I10: Yes, he passed away just before I started college.

TB: Oh okay, okay. So, um, obviously, if you were to describe them, they're, y'know, book-shaped, oblong...

I10: Yeah.

TB: Would you say it's fairly weighty? As a collection?

I10: Yes, I would say so, many of them are hardback.

TB: Um, and do they show many signs of wear on them?

I10: Very.

TB: Okay, so they're very worn. So what kind of wear does it show?

I10: The spines are cracked and some of the pages are missing, the ink is fading, uh, covers are - some, one of the covers is ripped.

TB: Have you ever written your name in any of them?

I10: Never.

TB: Yeah, cuz I feel people have very, very differing views on whether they'll write in books or not.

I10: Yeah. If it's like a textbook I don't feel bad about it, but...if it's something that was given to me and it already had that person's writing in it, I won't write over it.

TB: Okay, so if you were to sum up why this object has value, is-is there one particular reason, or has that reason changed over time?

I10: It's both because of that connection to my uncle that he didn't like anyone else in the family, he was a grumpy dude, but it was that and Harry Potter started at a very young age, my love of reading, and writing, and I've become a professional writer now, and I credit those books with being the first thing that really made me love reading.

TB: So it's kind of, they've kind of been an inspiration for you almost, those books.

I10: Yes.

TB: So where are these objects at the moment?

I10: Ah, safely stored in [home country]. I didn't want to risk bringing them with me, except for one particular copy that I'm particularly attached to.

TB: Oh, okay, which one is it that you're particularly attached to?

I10: The Prisoner of Azkaban, actually, again, it was another one from my uncle and, uh, again it's just the memories associated with it and it's my favourite of the books.

TB: So did he give them to you as a set, or one by one?

I10: Over time, some of them he gave me as birthday presents, others I inherited.

TB: Oh, that's really cool. So is there a particular story associated with these books, or is it more just, this relationship with your uncle over time and the inspiration you've had from them?

I10: More of an over time kind of idea.

TB: So when you're in [home country], do you find that you read them a lot?

I10: No, I don't, oddly enough. Um, I think one thing is because I read Harry Potter so many times as a child, and I have a very specific nostalgic attachment to them, a very set aesthetic and feeling in my mind associated with them, that I leave, as kind of like, a time capsule, and that way when I do feel particular nostalgia or a particular sort of melancholy I can reopen those books and experience that same feeling again. It's like, uh, scent association, when you smell something like a house you've been in before, or so on and so forth.

TB: So what would you say the main feeling you get, when you read these books or when you touch these books, is?

I10: Peace.

TB: Peace.

I10: Peace.

TB: Okay. So it's-it's like a kind of comforting, feeling?

I10: Yes.

TB: Okay. Are there particular times that you read them?

I10: Any time I'm going through a very large or wild change in my life - when I graduated, uh, undergraduate, and I moved, I moved all over, I lived in [country], I lived in [country], I've lived here, any time I have to go through a big change I find myself reading those books, remembering being 8, 9, 10 years old, sort of the nostalgia value of childhood, a moment to back away from change.

TB: Yeah. Cuz I've noticed nowadays that there's a lot of Harry Potter apps as well, games you can play -

I10: I've, I - nothing after 2010 happened as far as I'm concerned.

TB: Oh, really? *[laughs]*

I10: I kind of - I don't - I'm not a fan, actually.

TB: So you're very much just the books.

I10: Just the books, I don't like -

TB: What about the films?

I10: The films are okay, some of them are better than others. But, I-I don't - I just pretend that Rowling hasn't said anything since the books ended and I'm content with that.

TB: *[laughs]* So you don't use the Harry Potter, like, Pokémon Go-style game or anything like that, no?

I10: No.

TB: Um, how would you feel about these objects if they were lost or broken?

I10: I mean, obviously, I would be quite upset, as anyone would, losing something important to them. But, I think that the sense of value that they've already instilled and the sense of nostalgia that I know, regardless of whether or not, that I, that I still have the physical books, is persistent, I don't think that's going to go away. So, deva-I would be devastated at the physical loss, but I know that it would not be life-ending for me.

TB: And what do you, what do you think you'll do with these books in future? Do you think you'll pass them down through your family, or to a friend?

I10: I'd pass them to a friend.

TB: Yeah. And is there any reason why?

I10: Actually, yes, my um, my best friend, we met in, she was in 5th grade I was in 6th grade, I grew up in a very, very strongly religious area, and she was not allowed to read Harry Potter, but she loved it, um, from the bit of exposure she had to it. So, we went to school together, and I would sneak her the books every once in a while, and that's how we became friends, and we've been friends for a good 10 or 11 years, just because I started sneaking her Harry Potter books, for her Lord of the Rings Harry Potter crossover fan fiction, nonetheless!

TB: Oh, okay. Does she still write them?

I10: No *[both laugh]*, we-we look back on it and we-we read it every once in a while and laugh about it.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So, when I ask you to think about a particular object, besides the Harry Potter books, was there anything else that came to mind?

I10: Yes...I'm trying to decide, newer or older. Does it matter?

TB: No, nope, not at all.

I10: I have a stuffed cat that my grandmother gave to me. It's, um, a little Siamese beanie baby, uh, and its name since I was 4 years old has been Sagwa Minky. Sagwa after, there was a children's TV show in [home country] about a Siamese cat that lived in Ancient China, and it talked, you know, about the little moral lessons that you would teach kids, like, I loved cats, and we had a Siamese cat named Minky, so I kind of decided that those both were going to

be the name. And now I've associated it with that. And my grandmother, since, she's still alive but she's got dementia, and things are, sometimes she doesn't know who I am, sometimes she does know who I am, but I always remember she raised me, basically, my parents both worked full-time, um, and I was partially home-schooled, so it was my grandmother doing a lot of the time, taking care of me. I remember her picking me up from school and giving me, like, little pieces of dark chocolate, or watching TV - we used to watch British, um, British soap operas together, she loved British soap operas.

TB: Oh, any ones in particular?

I10: *As Time Goes By?*

TB: Oh, God, d'y'know, I've not heard of that, actually.

I10: I- these were *older* sitcoms, much older, like, *Waiting for God?*

TB: Vaguely, vaguely, yeah?

I10: These were definitely the old people kind of sitcoms, soap operas.

TB: Ohh, okay, that's, that's really interesting. And where is, where is -

I10: [Sagwa Minky is] with me.

TB: So she's in the UK?

I10: I believe so. I don't remember - I know that I've seen her, I went back to [home country] very recently to visit family and I can't remember if I'd seen her there and I put her somewhere safe or if I brought her back with me, but I know I wouldn't have put her anywhere that I was not absolutely positive of.

TB: Yeah. And do you get her out, and touch her often, or use her at all, or...

I10: Not in any particular way. I guess I kind of want to make sure that she just doesn't suffer any damage, stuffed animals are not the easiest thing to repair.

TB: Yeah, yeah. Did you, did you use her a lot when you were a child, yeah?

I10: Oh yeah, absolutely.

TB: Okay, so she's fairly worn at this point.

I10: You can see that she's been very well-loved.

TB: Oh okay.

I10: She's a little bit of, uh, a little bit of mange, but I still love her.

TB: And how would you feel if you lost her?

I10: I would be actually quite upset about that, um, my grandmother loves cats, and sometimes I will bring her little cat dolls, cuz she thinks they're real animals, and the positive association I have with that, because her dementia causes her to be very depressed, and so the positive association I have with that and with her giving that to me and again with childhood, I would be pretty upset if I lost it.

TB: Okay. So as a whole, would you say you're the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I10: I'm definitely a materialist.

TB: So how do you, how do you find that that impacts you, the way that you think about, obviously, moving around, how do you think that impacts your decisions about what you're going to take with you?

I10: It's definitely a strange and hard process. I think most of the time, the things that I prioritise are letters, and papers, and photographs. These - I have a few small sentimental objects that I'll hold onto, but having moved so many times, everything I own now fits into 2 suitcases. Um, having to move around so much I've had to prioritise objects over another. But when I was younger and I didn't have to move as much, I definitely held on to everything - I didn't even like throwing away old birthday cards.

Transcript: Interview 11

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 7 minutes 51 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I11: Interviewee 11

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does any particular object come to mind?

I11: I would probably think of the [Village Name] Plaque.

TB: Okay.

I11: So it's a, in terms of a historic item it's a little, um, silver plaque that was found in the village I live in, which depicts St Christopher on a journey. And we have it at the museum, um, but I think the 2 reasons why I specifically really like it, is that it's from the time area I really like. Um, my grandmother always used to wear a St Christopher, so it's a nice - people still do that! She always used to wear St Christopher. And it's from where I live so I just, I just really like that item. It's tiny, as well, I absolutely adore it, I've got a little photograph of it as well.

TB: So how big is it?

I11: It's just about, say, I can't do as my fingers are too big! *[laughs]* Just like that *[gestures]* big?

TB: So like 5, 6 centimetres?

I11: Yeah, but it's incredibly detailed.

TB: So where is it at the moment?

I11: It's in the [Place] Museum.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So, um, how long have you known about it, I guess?

I11: I've known about it since about 2013? So I didn't actually know it was there, and it was, as visiting, it was my Mum that spotted it...*[unclear audio for ~1 second]*...she just saw '[Village Name]' where we live and was like "Oh my God! We actually have something!" Because actually in the village I live in, that's not something we knew about.

TB: Oh, okay.

I11: And it's from an area, when we read where it was found, it's an area that we walk up and down all the time. Um, so it was just like this nice little find that we were like "Oh my God! Something was happening in our village so many hundreds of years ago!"

TB: Yes, so what was the, what-what time period are we talking?

I11: We're talking about the 1400s. So it was an item that was, um, used for pilgrimage, so they'd wear it when they were...probably going to York, to go to the Minster on pilgrimage.

TB: Oh, that's really cool actually!

I11: Yeah! I love it, I think it's really sweet.

TB: So what - if you could, if you could kind of sum up why it, it has value, how would you, how would you sum it up?

I11: I think it's because, I feel like, even though it's an item that, obviously you don't really go on pilgrimage, the majority of people don't go on pilgrimage anymore, it just has lots of little connections to modern times. Um, so people still wear St Christophers, or they still wear little things like my grandmother, um, you know, just for luck, etc etc. And yeah I think also because yeah, it's where we live and it's, it's the, as far as I'm aware it's the only thing we've ever found from our little village!

TB: So have you ever been given the chance to handle it?

I11: Not handle it, no. I just see it in the cabinet *[laughs]*.

TB: And look at it longingly -

I11: Yeah! I think it's also just the chance that there might be more stuff around where we live.

TB: Oh okay. So is that - in the museum, is it part of a larger collection?

I11: It's not - it's just a standalone object. And it's got its own, um, like, placard with it, to tell you more information about it, because I think it's so well-done that it's, it's quite rare in kind of it hasn't worn away as much, cuz it was found by the Ouse so obviously it was preserved in all of the mud, there, all the mud! So yeah, it's just part of a display about religion, really. I'm not that much of a religious person, really, I know my grandparents and everyone were, um, I think my parents were slightly? But not that much. Um, but I-I have a background in doing kind of, um, church architecture, that's what I did for my dissertation at undergrad, um, so I do, really, like all of that stuff.

TB: Oh, that's really cool. So how do you - I guess, when you see that plaque, how does it make you feel?

I11: I think I just like...it feels a bit homely, if you know what I mean? It's something I attach with being at home? Because, yeah, I think I have a very strong idea of where home is and what home...as we all do, what home's like, etc etc. Um, so I think I feel very close to it in that respect.

TB: Okay. So would you say that sort of being around it has a comforting effect?

I11: Yeah. Definitely, yeah.

TB: Okay. So, I guess if you're in the museum, do you tend to go and look at it a lot?

I11: Yeah *[laughs]*. If I'm, if I'm working in the museum, um, I'll always, especially at the end of the day, I'm always like "can I lock up the medieval gallery?" Cuz that, that is my favourite gallery anyway, but that is - it's also a thing where you, you feel more confident cuz you know you can talk about it. Um, and you know, yeah! And it's all around there.

TB: Oh, that's really cool! Um, so, I guess this may be a bit of a left-field question, but if this was lost or broken, how do you think you'd feel?

I11: I think, oh yeah, I'd be really upset. Um, I think I'd be a bit angry as well, because I feel it's, like we have a duty to protect these things. Um, so yeah, especially if it got lost or broken. I think if it got lost, I-I think I'd be more upset if it got lost than broken, cuz I feel like if it got broken, it's still there, and, yeah, it's...it depends how badly broken. But if it got lost, especially you lose part of, like, an important view of the past.

TB: Oh that's fair enough, yeah. So when I asked you to think about an object, did any others come to mind?

I11: Not really. I think there are quite a few objects, um, that I've seen that I-I really love or I do feel strongly about, um, but they're all more major items. Um, but I, when I see them, I just more feel like in awe, and I'm more fascinated by them, I don't just ever have really a quite happy, I feel like the [Village Name] Plaque isn't awe-inspiring, it's just nice? It's, um, it's not like, it's not as - the other ones that I think I'd - there's a woman - a statue called the Lady of Kalymnos, um, on the Greek island called Kalymnos, and that's probably the first archaeological find that I've ever seen that's made my jaw drop. It's so amazing, um, but when I feel that I more feel in awe of it. Actually a bit intimidated if you know what I mean? Whereas I don't with the Wistow Plaque.

TB: Oh that's really interesting. Would you say you're the, the kind of person who is attached to objects, or not?

I11: Not really. I don't normally get attached to objects, um, I more get-I get attached to the stories behind an object. The [Village Name] Plaque doesn't really have a story to it, we don't know anything about who had it or where they were coming from - probably going to York Minster, like I said, um, but yeah I probably, I probably get more attached to the stories, than to the objects, but then there are certain objects, that I think we all, all have the urge to think "Yeah we've gotta keep that, we've gotta preserve that" cuz that is the embodiment of the story.

Transcript: Interview 12

Date: 07/08/2019

Length of interview: 7 minutes 49 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I12: Interviewee 12

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value to you, or which means a lot to you, does one come to mind?

I12: Mmm...I guess, multiple things come to mind?

TB: Okay. Is there one item in particular?

I12: Um...well, um, the thing that - the bracelet I'm showing you is the first thing that I would like to talk about I guess, especially the one that, um, I brought abroad with me here.

TB: Oh, okay. So which bracelet is it?

I12: *[holding out wrist]* This is the room key, so...*[points]* it's this one.

TB: *[laughs]* Ah, okay. So, um, so what we're looking at is a, um, white bracelet - what is it made of, sorry?

I12: Uh, it's a kind of jade, uh, um, that, um, they used for the [countryname] Olympic medals.

TB: Oh that's really cool! Do you mind if I touch it?

I12: Sure!

TB: Thank you. So it's got an engraving in the top, and it's an engraving of a dragon?

I12: Yes, a [country] dragon.

TB: And all the way around, it's probably, let's think, probably less than 10cm in circumference, um, it's quite a thick bracelet, looking at this, and it's-it's actually much heavier than you would think, looking at - from what it is, but it's absolutely beautiful. Um, there you go! *[hands bracelet back]* So, um, how did you get it?

I12: Um, my mother gave it to me when I went to college, so that was 6 years ago.

TB: 6 years ago, okay. So you've had it for 6 years and why, why is it important to you?

I12: Mmm...well in the beginning I just really liked this kind of jade, cuz, um, it has a name from my hometown, um, I suppose it's, it's...kind of a representation of our hometown - although the name of the jade is actually the different...quality of it? So not exactly - it's doesn't necessarily means that, uh - it's called [name] jade, comes from [hometown] but still the name is come from my hometown so, yeah, it's kind of my favourite stone in the world. Yeah, and, and after my Mum gave it to me, I have brought it to so many places, and to travel around and because it's a dragon, and in [country] dragons are more associated with water than fire, I suppose, so uh, I've brought it to the Caribbean sea, and to a lake that I really like in China, uh southern Chinese city, so, yeah, and I call it my white dragon, so, yeah.

TB: So do you wear it every day?

I12: Most of time, but if I'm doing exercise or doing some housework I will take it off just to protect it *[both laugh]*.

TB: Of course, yeah. So how does it feel when you have it on? Does it feel heavy? Does it feel smooth?

I12: In the beginning I would feel it, but after a while I don't quite feel it. But I would feel it's something on my, on my hand and, like, I learn to protect it, yeah. In the beginning I always hit it on the door or something, but - yeah, after, after, I don't know, some time, I start to protect my hand even if it's not here I would still, like, be careful with it.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so, what do you do with this object? So obviously you wear it, but do you also find that you touch it sometimes, or move it around, or do you tend to just leave it on your wrist?

I12: Yeah, I would actually touch it, because it's a dragon so I would touch its head, yeah.

TB: And how do you touch it?

I12: *[imitates stroking it]*

TB: Oh, so you'll, you'll stroke the actual dragon on the...yeah, okay. And do you do that at - are there particular times or particular, um, situations in which you will touch it, or is just habit?

I12: Kind of a habit, but if I'm touching it I will feel like I'm actually, like, actually communicating with the dragon, like not in the real sense, but like I have a pet or something, that kind of feeling.

TB: So what kind of feelings - when you, when you touch it does it bring any kind of feelings up, does it make you feel anything?

I12: Mmm...I guess sometimes it will remind me of other places that I've been to, and, uh, I dunno, sometimes I just feel...back home, or just like that is a part that is with me.

TB: Okay. So how would you feel if this object was lost or broken?

I12: I guess very sad. Yeah...I would be very sad. I thought about it if - I took it off when I was, like, doing something around the lake, because it's my favourite lake - I have so many favourite things and I feel weird, but, yeah, I feel like in that moment if I lost it in the lake, it would be like, because it's a dragon, so it went back to the place where it should live, but, if in other situations, I would feel really sad...

TB: Oh, okay. So at the start you said that you could think of quite a few objects that are important to you, so what sort of other objects came to mind?

I12: Mmm...I guess anything that I associate with me as a...um...because I have a weird feeling with things associated with me, I would, like, when I read *The Little Prince* I would feel like everything that has attached to me, it's kind of like a special rose.

TB: A special...?

I12: Uh, rose, like the rose in *The Little Prince*, the book.

TB: Oh, okay, oh okay.

I12: Yeah, so, because I like, um, I dunno, Batman? So I also have comic books for Batman, and, uh, the little toy that I could hold it, uh, in my bag, and also, uh, Newt Scamander's, um, phone call? Um, some toy that you could put on a desk, because I like, uh, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Yeah, it's these kind of things.

TB: So they're all to do with your interests and your hobbies?

I12: Yeah.

TB: Oh okay, okay. So would you say that, overall, you're the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I12: Mmm...I feel like...I'm attached to something that I can't find in...the real world, that I have to find something to attach with, and that's where my objects come in.

Transcript: Interview 13

Date: 08/08/2019

Length of interview: 13 minutes 29 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I13: Interviewee 13

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value to you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I13: 2 things come to mind. They don't actually have any value, apart from that I use them a lot, and they are part of some of my routines, and they're very simple objects. One of them is a mug, that I use for drinking in the office, drinking coffee or tea or anything, and the other one is an umbrella, and both items I've had for quite a long time, um, as in like, not quite a long time, as in years, so the mug I've had since 2014, so that's 5 years, the umbrella I've had for...3 years. So it's not actually that long, as maybe other objects. Um, but...yeah, those are the two that come to mind.

TB: Okay. So what does the, what does the mug look like?

I13: The mug looks very much like a normal, fairly large mug. It's cylindrical, um, it has a handle, and it has really kitsch birds on it, and they're blue tits, and it says, in blue serif font around the top 'Blue Tit Blue Tit Blue Tit' and I won it on a Secret Santa...competition thing, um, and it's-well, it's funny to me as a [nationality] because it's- I never realised that tits are called, like, that the bird is called tits, so I thought it was hilarious, um, and since then I've had, and I've taken it, I won it, um, at a Christmas, um, party in York, and then I left York for 3 years, and I went to, um, several different labs, several different countries, and I always had this mug with me. Um, and it's- most of these countries weren't English-speaking countries and they all thought it was hilarious. Um, there were a few people who tried to...steal it? Um, but I still have it, I brought it back with me to York, and I try not to hog it, or hoard it too much, and keep it to myself, and I try not to be a dick about it, as in "that's my mug! You can't have this". So it goes into the communal space...it's currently, I don't currently know where it is, and I've not seen it in a week. It's probably in someone's office who is now on holiday -

TB: Okay -

I13: Um, I haven't gone around all the offices yet, only the ones I can go into, cuz - but I don't go into the locked-up ones, ah, even though I had a master key yesterday. But, I do worry where it is now, a little bit, because I don't...I don't want it to go missing just because someone thought they can, they can take it. But it's really silly actually, cuz it's just a mug.

TB: How do you think you would - so if, if you - just say you can't find it anywhere, how would you feel if it was lost?

I13: I think...if it would break, it would not be as bad as if it was lost. I'm- I feel like I'm very, I can cope very easily with things breaking, and actually I used to have an umbrella that I liked even more than the one I have now - that one broke - oh, no, actually, that one broke and I fixed then I gave it away and then it got lost. Um, but I had a - I replaced it really quickly, so even though I really attached to it, if it would break, I would replace it really quickly, probably. If it got lost, I would not replace it that quickly because it might come back.

TB: Yeah.

I13: If that makes sense. Then I have 2 nice mugs. And I don't want that *[both laugh]*.

TB: So how often do you use the - I mean I guess, living in Britain, you probably use the umbrella just as often as it rains, really.

I13: Um, yeah, but I also...I like checking the weather and then if it - I know it's raining, I can take my umbrella with me.

TB: Okay.

I13: And I like - it's, I think it's a nice-looking umbrella, um, I like walking around with it as well, and I don't see it as, I, something extra that I carry now cuz it's raining today. It, yeah, it makes...it almost makes it nicer to walk around with the umbrella -

TB: Oh, okay -

I13: And then when it rains it's like "Great, I've got my umbrella" and when it doesn't, it's a bit annoying cuz then I get home and I'm like "Oh, I took this umbrella with me for no reason". Um...but I still feel like I'm, I'm looking forward to taking it with me.

TB: Yeah. It is quite compact or is it a large umbrella?

I13: No it's quite large. It's like a, a walking umbrella, um, the first one I got that was that style I called, uh, a concierge? Not a concierge? What are those guys called that are like...that open, that like stand in front of fancy hotels and open the doors?

TB: Oh, uh, uh, like valets?

I13: Yeah, I guess. So it was like someone...or it was sold as an umbrella for someone who would...walk another person from like carriage to door, or something like that. So it was fairly big, and it was great to have, uh, to share it, as well. I think that was something I liked about it. And, now, the one that I have now, that I am equally attached to is also fairly large.

TB: And what does it, what does it look like? Does it have a design on, on the-?

I13: It's simple black, it has a fake wooden handle. Um, it has a metal tip, and...yeah, that's it.

TB: And how long have you had it for?

I13: About 3 years.

TB: About 3 years. So did you get it in the UK, or was it-?

I13: Um, I actually got it - I left mine in the UK when I went to [country] and I got it, I left it with my housemate at the time, and said "You can take this, I'm going to [country], I don't need an umbrella" and it turns out that [that country] is quite rainy, um, so I, I bought it online when I was in [country] but it was actually from a, a company in London so it's, it's still a UK umbrella.

TB: Okay. Um, so, going back to the, going back to the mug, um, do you kind of feel like, do you prefer to drink out of it?

I13: Yeah.

TB: Do you feel like it - the tea or the coffee or whatever you drink - do you think, like, it tastes better when it's in the mug, or is it more just-?

I13: It just feels more right. Um, interestingly the mug I have now [*indicating mug in hand*] is blank from where I can see it, there might be something written on the other side, I don't know if there is [*turns mug around*] - turns out there isn't, but the shape and the weight and the mouthfeel is...very similar to my other mug. I tend to use mugs that are...similar in size, and weight, and shape.

TB: Yeah, I think people tend to have preferences with mugs, like whether it's thick-lipped or thin-lipped, anything like that. Um, if you were to sort of, this is gonna be really hard, if you were to choose between the mug and the umbrella which one would you-

I13: The mug.

TB: The mug, so it was not a difficult choice.

I13: Well, cuz the mug I use all the time. Um, funnily the mug is easier to replace with another mug, whereas umbrellas seem, there seems to be a wide range of umbrellas. Um, so - but I use it all the time, the umbrella I don't use all the time. So...and the umbrella I've replaced before, so this umbrella already is a replacement, kind of. Would I be allowed to replace it? Or do I have to take it out of my life entirely?

TB: If you were to take one out of your life entirely.

I13: So no mugs whatsoever?

TB: Oh no, no just that mug or that umbrella - actually no yeah, I guess that makes - I guess that's just a replacement then isn't it yeah?

I13: Yeah. So, I dunno...well, my gut feeling was, the mug can stay, and the umbrella can go.

TB: Okay. Would you say you're the kind of person who is...who is attached to objects generally?

I13: No.

TB: No.

I13: Um...I used to be, before I moved to the UK. Um, which was my first major move, as in moving countries. Um...but...then I realised that I don't actually need to have a lot of things. And then I moved in with someone who had a lot of things and I was like "you have too much stuff". I don't want that. And then, I moved out into my own place in [country] and I didn't have a lot of stuff, I didn't buy much more stuff, um, and I really enjoyed that, I enjoy not having a lot of things.

TB: It sounds like, having had - had to think about objects because you're moving around or you've had to move around, it feels like that may - it sounds to me like, that's affected your relationship with objects, or the way you see objects.

I13: Yeah. It, well, moving around...reveals to you how much you use an object, and how much it has worth, as in like a functional worth, even if it - it's function is to look nice.

TB: Yeah.

I13: Um, and how much it's just weight.

TB: Mhmm.

I13: Um, so I try to reduce that weight. A lot.

TB: Mhmm. So, um, you said that you, um, won the mug in a competition, in a Secret Santa competition, so it wasn't a gift, it was just a -

I13: The way it worked, we were allowed to...it-it wasn't a Secret Santa in the way that people brought gifts and that you wouldn't know which person, um, the gift is from. But, it wasn't, like, um, you have to buy a gift for so-and-so, everything went into a pile, and I think then we were allowed to...some kind of game, it might have been dice, or something like that, it was, it felt like there was some skill involved but also a certain degree of randomness. And you

could either pick a present from the pile, or you could pick a present from someone who had already picked one.

TB: Oh okay.

I13: While the presents were still wrapped, so you didn't know what was inside. So we knew there were some big ones that might have had something really small in them. So, there were some where you just had a feeling "this is the great present and that person already has it" and that mug was already picked by someone else. I didn't know it was a mug, but I was just like "I want her present, I think that's the right one". So I took it away from her.

TB: And did you ever find out who'd bought the mug?

I13: Um...I think I might've, but I can't remember. It might have been a person I didn't know...there were people I didn't know at the party so...I don't, I don't have, like, um, any person that comes to mind, when I think about the mug, "Oh, like, it's from her" or something. I only see it as in from, it's from her, the person that had the present before I had it. So, I kind of got the mug from her, or I took it. So, yeah, there's no person attachment - personal attachment.

TB: Right! I think that's - actually, one more thing. So where is the umbrella now?

I13: At home. Next, next to the door.

TB: Ah okay. When was the last time you used it?

I13: On...Monday?

TB: Oh, it was very rainy that day!

Transcript: Interview 14

Date: 08/08/2019

Length of interview: 15 minutes 12 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I14: Interviewee 14

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I14: Yeah, I mean lots of things come to mind...I think emotionally, the first thing that springs into my head, uh, is-well, there's 2, if I'm allowed to talk about 2 things, as they're both rings. Um, and 1 has come to me very recently, and 1 came to me 4-5 years ago, and one belongs to my mother-one belonged to my mother-in-law and one belongs to my mother.

TB: Okay.

I14: So, um, when my mother died, she had 4 significant rings. I had - there are, she had 4 daughters, we each got 1. Um, and when my mother-in-law died very recently, um, she had a diamond and sapphire ring, and because, my, engagement rings and eternity rings are diamond and sapphire, it was decided amongst my husband's family that I should have this ring.

TB: Okay.

I14: So I have these 2 rings, um, which...are significant because of the people that they came from.

TB: Okay. So are these the rings you're wearing today?

I14: No, I'm not actually wearing - although interestingly, that is a Claddagh ring, um, and I have my Mum's Claddagh ring, and that's a connection with the family, because my mother's family were Irish. So, when we reached the age of 21, each one of us was given a Claddagh ring from Ireland by my maternal grandmother, so it's, it's a kind of link with, uh, my mother's family, um...interestingly, had you said choose from my grandmother's significant rings which one you wanted, I probably wouldn't have chosen it, mainly because I already have one, um, but it was decided it was done by lots, the rings went in one, 1, 2, 3, 4 in another, and it was age order and we just got...um...

TB: So these rings, these 2 rings you mentioned, what sort of size and material are they?

I14: What do you mean -

TB: The 2 rings you spoke about at the start -

I14: Yeah.

TB: What sort of size, and are they- are they gold?

I14: Uh, they're both gold, and, the Claddagh ring is, a, a, more reddy-gold, it's, uh, my own ring is a sort of yellow gold, whereas this is a - which I think is to do with the age of it - um, and the other thing about it, the difference between the 2 rings is my mother's Claddagh ring, because she wore it every day of her life from the age of 21 til when she died, which was at the age of 85, is beautifully worn, so the edges are rounder. Uh, there is something about it, uh, I think, I swap it around with my own so sometimes I wear it and sometimes my own - my own still has all of those sort of sharp edges, um, because it's more recent than hers, whereas hers, it's-it's quite round, um, a softer, um, I think it-it's a softer ring and that's, that's, that's the passing of time, it's almost like her life - uh - yeah, it's an odd thing, and when I wear it, I'm very aware that I'm wearing hers and not mine.

TB: Oh, okay. Are they quite heavy rings?

I14: Um...sort of, the weight of any kind of, uh, gold ring, really. Um, the-the one that's come to me most recently I have only worn a couple of times, um...and it has less - I don't associate it so much with my mother-in-law because I never actually saw her wear it, um, that's more about the connection that my husband's family had made a connection between that ring and me. So it's slightly different. But in terms of weight, they are...the weight of a small, gold ring, so no they're not terribly weighty.

TB: Yeah, not very heavy. So if you could sum up why each ring is important to you, how would you sum them up?...You can do this separately, or together.

I14: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, the ring from my mother is important because it...sort of encapsulates her, and her life. There are so many things attached to it that the-the family, Ireland, the wear on the ring, the fact that I saw it, and it-it's a memory of her, um, so, I think that ring is, the significance of that ring is, my mother, um, and everything about it, and weirdly the kind of roundy, squidgy, softy thing and it's, it's kind of do with mother-my Mum and hugs and things and - that one, that one is, that one, it just encapsulates my mother.

TB: Mhmm.

I14: It makes me think of her, whenever I-whenver I see it, I think of her. It's - it makes me feel very comfortable, um, there's a kind of reassuring feel about it. The other one, um...still- actually, right now makes me just feel sad because it's a very recent loss, so...

TB: Do you tend to wear that one very often?

I14: Uh, the most recent one? I've only worn it twice since I got it. But, um...it felt odd. But partly that felt odd, because I took my own off, and because I wear my own all the time, but it doesn't feel odd when I swap my Claddagh ring for my mother's Claddagh ring. It did feel, um, did feel odd removing my eternity ring and putting on my mother-in-law's.

TB: Yeah.

I14: That was, that was an interesting one.

TB: So where are both rings right now?

I14: Uh, they are both in, uh, individual ring boxes sitting in a drawer in my bedroom at home.

TB: Ah okay. And if you don't mind my asking, how often would you say you wear your mother's ring?

I14: Um...I probably swap them around every other week or so, I wear it quite a lot.

TB: So it's sort of one week on, one week off?

I14: Yeah. And-and I will suddenly-I will suddenly think "Oh, let's swap them around" and then I will wear it for a period of time - a week, ten days - and then think "Oh, I'll put my own back on now". Um, it-it's not rigid, I don't, but periodically.

TB: Yeah. So - this is quite a sensitive question, I guess, but - so don't feel you have to answer it -

I14: Okay.

TB: - Um, but how would you feel if either of the rings was lost or broken?

I14: Um, the one I've got most recently I would probably feel guilty, cuz I would think "Ohhh, I've lost your mother's ring [husband's name], I'm really sorry.. Um, but I don't think...for all that I'm pleased to have it and it reminds me of my mother-in-law, it doesn't yet have the same connection...I think if I lost my mother's, that would be quite devastating, that would be quite hard to take because I would feel I'd lost a bit of her, because it represents her, so much, um, that's quite a hard one to consider cuz I - that would, that would be really quite a tough thing to deal with.

TB: Yeah. Do you have other belongings of your mother's as well?

I14: I have *all* of her journals, which I'm going to turn into a book for my family at some point. Uh, but, but they are fascinating because they - she had 8 children, she was a very busy woman, she did 1001 things, she was never home, and the journals - she only kept a journal when she was travelling, and it's almost like the journals were a way of bringing some kind of order to her life which was otherwise a bit full-on, chaotic. So they're the things that I have most, I have other bits and pieces but, yeah.

TB: Yeah. Would you say that you're the type of person who is attached to objects generally?

I14: Um...a small number, I don't, sort of, hang onto things, I'm quite good at "it's just stuff", um...although having said that I've never [*touches table*] touch wood been burgled or anything so I have no idea how I would feel but, um, I think there are a very small number of significant things. But, generally, I think people matter more than things, and it is fundamentally - it's just stuff. Um, I don't know what I would do if I actually lost any of these significant things, um, but I'm quite good at just kind of like, clearing out, and I don't, I don't hang on to things, and I have a philosophy of 'life is too short, so we eat it, we drink it, we wear it, we use it, we do it now' rather than saving things for special occasions.

TB: Okay, so when I asked at the start about 'think of an object which has value to you', were there others that came to mind besides the rings?

I14: Yes. Um, again, but it's a family thing, um, my wonderful godmother, [name], had no children of her own, she left her estate divided between her, however many nephews and nieces, 40, whatever, but each of her godchildren got a small amount of money and, I bought a bench, and it's in my garden, and every time I sit on it - *every* time I sit on my bench, I think of her, that was one that came into my head.

TB: And how long have you had that for?

I14: Gosh, must be ten years or so, more, I think, when she died, maybe more. 15 years maybe? So...

TB: I was just thinking as well, you're, um, you're wearing - is it claddagh?

I14: Claddagh ring.

TB: Claddagh - how do you spell that?

I14: C-L-A-D-D-A-G-H.

TB: Oh okay. Do you think you'll pass that down yourself?

I14: Um, I have various rings which are, um...supposed-are going to be left to different people. So my engagement, my son - I only have one child - my son, um, has said that he would have my wedding ring that's fine, um, I have my engagement - again it's probably like my mother, I have 4 or 5, my-my own engagement ring, my eternity ring, my Claddagh ring, they are all earmarked for goddaughters. So, um, that-that's how I- yeah, I think just passing them on is quite nice.

TB: Yeah, yeah. Is it - and why do you, why do you like the idea of passing them on?

I14: Um, for the - I think because it's-it's the connection, I like the, uh, I like the Virginia Woolf and other people's philosophies about, y'know, life after death, you live on after death as long as other people remember you, as long as somebody says your name, you're still around, and, um, I do like those connections between generations that can somehow, the object somehow represents that connection between...generations.

TB: Yeah, I think it was the ancient Egyptians who said that you die twice - once when your body dies and once when your memory dies, and I think that's a bit similar to that -

I14: It is, it's that - I mean I know it's-there's various different philosophies and different people who talk about it in different ways, but that's, um, you know, there's that thing about every time somebody mentions your name, there's a little kind of spark in the universe somewhere, cuz your memory is still, is still there. But I - family matters, connection with family matters, I'm fascinated by family history...and I think it's just little tiny, be nice to think that, further down the line, somebody's got great-auntie Auntie [I14's] ring that...that's, that's how I...but, um, yeah. But the whole family knows it's [godmother's] bench as well, so when they come and visit they'll sit on it and they know...

TB: Is it metal or wooden?

I14: Wooden, with a flat arm so you can put a drink on it.

TB: Oh, very good.

I14: She was a very sensible woman, my godmother.

TB: And where did you get the bench from? Was it specially made or did you just see it, and...

I14: No we, um, we-we went to a company that are-make very good benches and had a discussion and then had one made.

TB: So what sort of discussions went into the making of the -

I14: It was quite simple. I wanted it to be very simple. Um, I needed it to be a certain height at the back cuz it had to be comfortable. It just definitely had to have flat arms for putting a drink on, you have to be able to rest a cup of tea or a glass on the bench and...so it was quite, it was quite - nothing very complicated, it was just, um, making sure it was what I wanted/

TB: Do you think the design was partly with her in mind, or was it more about you personally, what you wanted as -

I14: Well her garden mattered to her, and that's one of the reasons I wanted a garden bench, so, she liked sitting in her garden so it-it, comfort I s'pose was probably her, for her, that it needed to be comfortable. Um, but it's fascinating just kind of thinking now, cuz when you think about the things that matter, it's - seemingly in my head, now, it's all about memories attached. Whatever's coming into my head, it triggers...memories, mostly of people, interestingly. Cuz we don't collect stuff when we travel, so I don't have...yeah, so it's people I think, memories of people.

Transcript: Interview 15

Date: 08/08/2019

Length of interview: 17 minutes 22 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I15: Interviewee 15

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I15: Uh, yes. Uh, the first thing that comes to mind, uh, the automatic thing that comes to mind, is a teddy bear.

TB: Okay. So could you describe the teddy bear for me?

I15: Yes. He, uh, is about, uh, 25cm high. He is greying - he was once cream and fluffy, uh, he is now greying and threadbare. Glass bead eyes that are battered and that have chips out of them, uh, and a hard plastic nose with what looks like a moustache over the top of his nose, where as a baby I chewed all of the fluff and fur off of him. Um, and I've had him since I was a couple of weeks old, and he's just never been very far away.

TB: Does he have a name?

I15: He's called Teddy.

TB: That's a very imaginative name.

I15: I know! *[both laugh]*

TB: So who - who - I assume it was a gift? I don't think you were buying yourself teddy bears at 2 weeks old.

I15: No.

TB: So who gave it to you?

I15: He was a gift from, um, friends of my parents - possibly my godparents. Um, although, I've never been entirely sure if I have official godparents or not. So, yeah, friends of the family anyway.

TB: Um, and why would you say that this object has value for you, if you were to try and sum it up?

I15: Uh, he was - I mean, I say 'he', it's not an it. I personified him very early, I talked to him, I projected onto him, I played with him, uh, as a sort of friend. Not that I didn't have friends but, um, but some of my earliest memories involve him as a, as a kind of participant. Uh, and I just carried him everywhere, so he was a comfort, uh, a toy, um...and...I don't know-I don't know exactly why but I can vaguely remember, um, at school recognising that my friends were deliberately abandoning, um, old cuddly toys because they knew that they were childhood toys and baby toys and they wanted to be something different, and I can sort of remember deciding, uh, that I felt guilty about the idea of doing that to *him*, because he was a *friend*, and so making the choice to not do that. And so, yeah, he has-he's never been far away, when I

went to uni I didn't take him to uni, but, um, even felt slightly guilty about that. A-and I think that-that guilt as much as anything else means that I've always just kind of kept him close by.

TB: Yeah. So where is he now? Is he at your house?

I15: He is at home, yes. He is in my bedside table, um, yeah, but, again, not far away.

TB: So, obviously you, y-you used him a lot as a kid, or - I say used, that doesn't seem the right kind of word, um, interacted with him a lot as a kid. So how about now? Do you still rely on him at all, or ever, ever sort of go back to him...?

I15: I...don't so much, anymore, but, um, because *[laughs]* because my wife is an archaeologist as well, she spends, uh, up to 2, 2 and a half, sometimes 3 months out of the country, uh, in one go, on fieldwork. And, we now have a baby together, so that's not happening as much, uh, but, up until, um, probably up until last year, when she was away, when she was away I would get him out of the cupboard and he would be...maybe on the pillow next to me, just not far away, not, not exactly to cuddle, but just as a familiar...comfort thing, in her absence. Yeah. Um...as a, as a touchstone if you like.

TB: And did you - this is probably a difficult question to answer but did you find yourself doing that consciously, thinking "Okay, I'm gonna get a teddy out" or was it more of a thing where you thought "I think maybe, maybe this will make me feel better" and...?

I15: It was, yeah, that was it. It w-it was semi-conscious, I would think of it one evening when I went to bed on my own, and go...and-and realise that I was lonely, and go "I could get Teddy out of the cupboard. I don't-I don't have to get Teddy out of the cupboard, of course, but I'm going to get Teddy out of the cupboard" and he would then stay there whilst she was away. And then she'd come back and I'd put him away again. Um, and luckily she doesn't take the mick out of me too much about it.

TB: So, um, how does it-how does sort of-I guess you could answer this both as a child and now - how does Teddy make you feel?

I15: Uhhh, as a child...when I played with him he was, he was part of a projection of games. I - I wanted to be SuperTed and so he was a teddy so he was SuperTed. I wanted to be a policeman, and so my grandma knitted him some blue clothes and so he was a policeman. And so, he was...I didn't have, kind of action figures or anything as a small child, so, u h, he was

the personification of my games. Um, as an older child he was a comfort thing and then a secret comfort thing, not for games anymore but, he was a piece of my childhood, of my younger childhood, that I was deliberately holding onto, uh, in the face of, um, friends expecting change, or...or that kind of peer pressure towards change, saying that this should be something that you should do. And so later on as well, and now, um, I'm not, I'm not embarrassed by him, but I'm aware that some people will expect me to be embarrassed by him. So he is a, a guilty pleasure if you like, um, yeah, I still attach, uh, those feelings of friendship in the same way that I did my dog growing up, um, to you, but it's a slightly guilty thing so he stays in the cupboard most of the time and it's a secret pleasure.

TB: So how would you feel if Teddy was lost or broken?

I15: Devastated. I, um, I used to - those games about, y'know, what would you do if your house burned down or something? Apart from - my family, making sure they're out? Um, he would probably be one of the, one of the first things that I would think of, either to get out or as a loss afterwards. Um, because documents can be replaced, photos, um, uh, would be lost but I'd still have memories, but, but I would, I would feel his loss as, as an item of comfort, but I suspect that I would also feel a little guilty, that I didn't think of him in time to get him or save him or not lose him or something like that.

TB: Have you ever thought about passing him down?

I15: Uh, yes, and, um, I- yeah, I have a 7-month-old son and I haven't thought of exactly passing Teddy onto my son, uh, but what I did do, the week he was born, I went out and bought a teddy who was as close as possible to Teddy that I could think of so that I'm not passing on Teddy himself, cuz Teddy's mine, but I-I've tried to give [my son] something as close as I can.

TB: The kind of essence of it.

I15: Exactly, yeah, yeah.

TB: And what's [your son's] - if you don't mind me asking, what's his relationship with his teddy like?

I15: Uh, he *[laughs]*, uh, I was slightly disturbed to find that he chews his face in exactly the same way, apparently, I did. At the moment, because he's only 7 months old, um, he can't really, uh, he doesn't hold onto things for very long, he plays with them for, kind of 5 minutes,

um, but um, I've gone for a slightly more original name than, than Teddy - he's Edward, the more formal version of Teddy. And he crushes him to his face, and bites his nose, um, and he has maybe just started towing him along as we go, but that may be kind of an automatic reaction and I might be projecting onto him at that point.

TB: Oh, I see.

I15: Um, but yeah. Um, I-I expect that he will choose one of those cuddly toys -

TB: Oh, he's got others?

I15: He's got 2 others. He's got one another that my Dad bought him because my Dad also had a teddy bear very like mine, um, uh, and so yeah, I expect that he will choose one of them but we're just waiting to see which.

TB: *[laughs]* Not a competition then?

I15: Not even slightly! No rivalry at all!

TB: Um, so when I asked you to think about an object, did any others come to mind or was it very much Teddy?

I15: Uh, he's the first thing - there are a couple of things that I think, uh, that I think of that were given to me by my grandparents. Um, that were given to me at particular...points, when they were deliberately passing on an inheritance, um, uh, so there's a - there's a box that my grandma was given when she was a teenager that's a - it's a secret box, it's designed to look like books and then you slide parts of the box and you open the different drawers and things, uh, that she gave to me with, not exactly a ceremony but very deliberately saying "I'd like you to have this". Um, or a watch from my grandad or a bike from my other grandad, and it's...uh, usually small things that...that I look after and that are special to me because they were deliberately passed on as an inheritance. But they don't immediately jump to mind as my choice, if you like. It's-it's my choice to hold onto them, but I'm also holding onto them *because* they're part of an inheritance and I would like to, um, to pass them on one day as well. Um, yeah.

TB: Would you say that generally you, generally you're the type of person who's attached to objects?

I15: Yes.

TB: Yeah.

I15: Uh, I know that my wife worries that I'm a hoarder sometimes. I like...I like collecting things. Um, I-I don't have any kind of deliberate - like, I'm not a stamp collector, I'm not a deliberate collector, but if I notice a pattern in 2 or 3 things that I have, I have a tendency to assign them as if it were a mini-collection in my mind and then I like - if I come across something similar, picking up another one of them.

TB: Okay.

I15: Um, and I will hang onto them for a period of time, and then realise that I am effectively hoarding a small collection of random items, and then usually get rid of them, or pass them on.

TB: So it's kind of a, it's almost like 2 very different relationships with objects, it's that hoarding it, then immediately throwing it away.

I15: Yeah absolutely. And so, I was also the kind of kid, uh, who if we went to the beach, uh, I would pick up rocks on the beach, and as I walked along the beach would fill my pockets with small interesting rocks that I liked or, um, nice stones, little crystals. And then at the end of the day, take them home, or at the end of the holiday go "Why have I got a bag full of rocks?" and throw all but 2 of them away usually, and I'd usually pick my favourite 2 and then hold onto that. Um, or I realised several years ago that I had amassed a collection of, um, uh, metal bottlecaps, kind of beer bottlecaps, that started as a "That's a nice cap, I want to keep that because it makes me think of something, I like the artwork on it and I want to look at that. Every time I have a new type of beer or something I'll collect that cap, and I'll have one of each of the-" and then I went "I'm hoarding bottlecaps" and threw them all away without a second thought. Um, and the rocks have ended up in the bottom of flowerpots and that sort of things as a, as a base. So yes, there-there are particular things that I struggle to let go of - books. I couldn't think of one in particular, but I-I struggle to let go of books, um, and then there's other stuff that I collect and then go "No, I'm just dragging it around now".

TB: Yeah. How do you feel about with books, cuz books are something that I think a lot of people find they become very attached to, how do you find the movement towards e-books and digital books, and Kindles, and things like that?

I15: Yeah. I, I have an e-reader, and I've had it for a few years, and I love it because it's easy to read at night, it's great to read on a plane and it means when I go on fieldwork, I can take 20 books without the weight. But, um, I...I will read books on an e-reader as an experiment to see whether I want that book. Uh, and so I'll get them out of the library or something and, and have them on the e-reader, um, and if I like the book, I will buy it, and I want a nice copy of it, and so my favourite books, um, I usually only have one copy, but sometimes have, have several copies of it, because I've ended up buying a paperback in a charity shop and then looking out for a hardback and then going "That's a nice hardback! I want that one instead." Even though it wasn't the one I read the first time round. And then there are particular books, my kind of all-time favourites, that-where I've still got the paperback, because that was also the first copy of it that I read, and so I assign some kind of specialness to that copy, not just to the book itself. Um, so it's again, it's a slightly messy relationship, um, I have an e-reader but then I will have physical copies of-of the books that I've...recently read on an e-reader, that I like the best. Yeah. And I like displaying them as well, and luckily [my wife] feels the same way and so, yeah [laughs] that's not getting, not filling the house with stuff we don't want. But yeah, it's, uh, an overlap, um, but if I see books in a shop - again, even if I haven't read them, if I see it and I like it and I'm curious enough, I'll buy it there and then and I prefer that to reading an e-copy. Yeah.

Transcript: Interview 16

Date: 11/08/2019

Length of interview: 10 minutes 35 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I16: Interviewee 16

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so, if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I16: Yes, so I'm thinking of my childhood plush toy, my favourite plush toy. Um, it's a - my Mum made it, it's a little monkey, and um, now I'm at about the fourth generation of the original one? When I first chose it from the bookshelf where all the plush toys were, and then I kept obviously chewing it, and I lost a few of them -

TB: - and did your Mum keep making more?

I16: Yes.

TB: So about, um - if you could describe it, the size, the shape, the weight, the material?

I16: Yeah. So it's about...20 to 30cm long, head to the tail. Um, it's very soft, uh, fake fur, with uh buttons, brown buttons for eyes that look - with pupils as well. It's quite flat, yeah, quite a flat monkey so it's got the head which is one module, the body it's another module, then you have the two arms and legs which is just like 2 sausages which run across and then you've got the tail. Um, and, yeah. It's very light and very soft, but I tend to not - I've always been very careful with it, so it's like kind of very delicate.

TB: So, um, so - how long have you had - you said you're on the fourth generation - how long have you had the current iteration?

I16: I think since I was maybe 13? So, over ten years. And it's starting to get a little bit - it's sitting on the bedside table, but yeah so it's getting to, a little ruined.

TB: A little bit worn out? Okay. So how often would you say - is it, does it have a name?

I16: It is! *[laughs]* It does, it's called Titti. Um, it's got a bit of a funny - did you want to know the story or -

TB: *[laughs]* Yeah, go on then.

I16: So it was in this, as I was told, when I was about maybe 6, 7 months old, and there was this wall with all the various soft, uh, toys and plush toys and then my parents kept on giving me different ones and I was kind of rejecting them and then one day, my Mum was walking through the, the door or something with me, um, carrying me and I kept saying "die, die, die" in German, um, and then hence why kind of, and pointing at the monkey, and then that's why it came out to be Titti for some reason, don't know how.

TB: So how, how would you spell that, the name?

I16: Literally T-I-T-T-I. Don't know why, but...

TB: So why - if you had to kind of sum up why it's important to you, what is it about Titti that's important?

I16: I think it just uh, having been made by my Mum, and kind of the constant presence throughout, um, my life and even through when, cuz it's always been my go-to for comfort and when, or in the evenings, or when I was scared or, you know in bed alone, and then I would kind of cuddle it and like, cuddle it by my neck...

TB: So do you, do you still use it often, or does it tend to just stay on your bedside table?

I16: Um, not too often nowadays, but definitely when I need comfort or I'm stressed I would just take it and just like stroke it a little or, or just have it next to me, you know, as a real comfort.

TB: Yeah. Oh okay. Um, and when you stroke it, how does it feel?

I16: Good, calming, but also sometimes I notice "Oh I haven't stroked it in a little while" so the fur is getting a bit harder or it's degraded so it's an excuse to carry on stroking it, yeah.

TB: Oh okay. So, so you kind of want to touch it?

I16: I want to touch it, I want to keep it, kind of preserve it in that state of, kind of, well-preserved, and even now that it's getting kind of worn out, some of the actual canvas, like the hands and the face and constantly like maybe sewing it up again or keeping it kind of...

TB: And when you interact with Titti, how, how do you feel, how does it make you feel?

I16: Brings me back in time, um, kind of that, yeah, childhood memories, but, yeah, very much calming effect, um, yeah.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so how would you feel if it was lost or broken? Because I guess you're on the fourth version so you've been through this a few times already, so what was that like?

I16: Really stressful. I-I mean it happened, the one that I lost, that happened in nursery, but I still remember how distressed I was, especially because my Mum had told me not to bring it to school and I really wanted to show it to my friends and then it got lost, um, during free play, um, I only found an arm back -

TB: Oh no!

I16: - so that was definitely a moment of loss, and a moment of, uh, kind of slight, in the evenings or night I was trying to find a replacement but it was not replaceable, as well, so - and when the, when the previous generation kind of was, okay, this is kind of really worn out,

probably should, should um throw it away or put it away and then, I was like “Yes I’m growing up, I’m 14, I’m fine”, um, but then it didn’t quite work so I guess, yeah, kind of that, wasn’t quite ready to let it go?

TB: Yeah. So, if you don’t mind me asking, this current version, how do you feel - how do you think you’d feel if it was lost or broken?

I16: Um...probably very distraught, as it’s unreplaceable. I’ve got the, I’ve got the, blue print to make it again possibly, but then it wouldn’t be the same.

TB: Oh, okay, so there’s that kind of ineffable essence to it.

I16: Yes, yeah.

TB: Um, when I asked you to think about an object that’s important to you, was it very clear in your mind, to pick the one you picked, or were there any others that came to mind?

I16: It was very clear, but at the same time your question made me think about more everyday life objects, so like I dunno, a phone or a cup of tea, or a pen or something like that so, it was more a choice out of not being pragmatic, kind of thing.

TB: Okay. And would you say, do you consider yourself to be the kind of person who’s attached to objects?

I16: Um, it depends on what it is. If it’s things like, um, like tickets or, or, now that I’m packing stuff away we’ve found some stones that we collected, on, like with [my partner] on one of our first dates and, and we just have a date on it, and we’re like “Oh, shall we throw it away? Actually, we want to keep it” so if it’s something that’s got a lot of memory and a lot of meaning, then yes definitely. If it’s something - like other objects, then far less. Um, yes.

TB: Um, so would you say that, that moving house-moving house has, has forced you to think about the way you interact with objects or which objects are important, or, do you feel like you’ve had to make big decisions?

I16: Definitely. I’ve had to, I’ve-it’s definitely made me consider objects in space, in relation to space as well, and, and means of how to transport them over to the new house, and how much more space we’ll have and will not, and...but, it’s almost made it quite, a bit easier to maybe discard some objects and make me reflect again on “Right, do I actually really need this second pair of...the same shoes?” Or something like that, or even going through all the

tickets, old memories and things like that, do I need to keep the...Christmas cards from 2 years ago? And, and, and whether there are other ways I can turn them into something that then, is still memory. But, it's not in the kind of, that format.

TB: Has there been anything that's surprised you, things that you've been, things that you've thought "I need to keep that", that you didn't think you would?

I16: Um *[laughs]* this is gonna sound really funny, but some kitchen equipment that I have spares and, and, extras, and now I'm thinking moving, I'm thinking "No I need to keep this in case then later on I break one and then at least I've got it", rather than, and yeah, it might take a bit more space but then in the long run it'll be, worth it?

Transcript: Interview 17

Date: 12/08/2019

Length of interview: 7 minutes 22 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I17: Interviewee 17

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I17: Lots of things do, so, yeah.

TB: We can talk about lots of things.

I17: Okay *[laughs]*.

TB: So, maybe, um, you could either talk about them all at once, or talk about them one by one? If you could sort of give a basic description for me?

I17: Okay, um, well the first thing that comes to mind is a gold locket that used to belong to my gran, who has passed away, and inside the locket there's two photos, one of which is my grandpa and one of which is my great-grandpa, my nan's dad, when he was young. And, obviously it's a link to my ancestors so that's why it's really significant to me. I don't wear it very much but I love it, and it's really important to me for that reason.

TB: Oh, okay. Is it quite a small locket then?

I17: Yeah it's quite small, sort of probably about the size of a 10 pence piece, round, gold, with a little turquoise stone set in the front of it.

TB: Okay and how long have you had that for?

I17: Um, I'm tryna think, as I'm sure I wore it on my wedding day so I had it then and that was 23 years ago so I've had it quite a while. My gran did give it to me before she passed away so, um, yeah, I've had it, probably must be, let's say 23 years for the sake of argument. That's how long I've had it, yeah.

TB: Okay, and so, um, was there-was there a particular reason she gave you the locket?

I17: I don't remember a particular reason, I think it was just, you know, as people do, they sort of go through their things and decide that, maybe they don't want them anymore and they want to pass them on, and I think she just wanted me to have it.

TB: Oh, okay, okay, fair enough. Um, and, so, you say you don't wear it very often - is that, did you used to wear it a lot when you first got it, or do you wear it on special occasions...?

I17: Um, I've never worn it a lot because I'm not a gold person, I'm more of a silver person so it doesn't really go with other things that I've got, but as I said, I did wear it on my wedding day and I've worn it on a few other occasions that I would describe as being special.

TB: So where is it now?

I17: It's in a little box, in a wooden sort of chest thing underneath my bed, so it's - I know where it is and it's nice and safe *[laughs]*. I can get it if I want to.

TB: So how often do you get it out or look at it?

I17: Um...probably sort of once a year maybe? My grandpa fought in Burma in the Second World War and in July there's a special service at the York- at York Minster for the Kohima Day, which is commemorating the Battle of Kohima, and most of my - well some of my family try to go to that, and I went to that this year so I will have got the locket out then at that point just to have a look, just before that, just to remember my grandpa a little.

TB: So for you, if you could sum up why the locket's important, what would you - how would you sum it up?

I17: Um, it's the link to my ancestors, definitely, because both my grandma and my grandpa have passed away now, so um I never knew my great-grandfather because he died before I was born, so um it is, it's just, it's the family link, it's the link to my ancestors, just the continuation of our family, really.

TB: And how does it make you feel when you hold it? Or when you get it out and look at it?

I17: Um, I think a little bit emotional cuz obviously I miss my grandparents, but just a sort of a kind of a feeling of, almost like security, y'know, just sort of, kind of sensing them standing behind me, if you like, so um, yeah.

TB: And how do you think you would feel if the locket was lost or broken?

I17: Um, I think I'd feel incredibly guilty *[both laugh]* as my gran gave it to me and obviously I would blame myself if something happened to it, even if it wasn't my fault, and I'd also be really upset, and if it was broken, I'd get it fixed or I'd find a jeweller who could fix it - if it was, y'know, lost or stolen I don't know what I'd do really, I'd just be really upset.

TB: Um, so you said that there were other objects that came to mind -

I17: Mhmm.

TB: - so would you tell me about another one?

I17: Yep! Um, I guess probably the next one would be my altar table which my husband made for me. Um, I'm a [religion] and so is my husband which means we sort of have slightly different religious traditions to conventional [religion] people. And, um, a few years ago I decided that I wanted to have a permanent altar set up in our living room, you have thing like, you know, statues of [religious figures] and things on there, and I - because he does woodwork, I asked him if he could make a table for me, and I was expecting it to just be completely basic, like square top, four legs on each corner, really basic - which would have been fine, it wouldn't have bothered me if that was all it was, um so he worked on it for a bit and one day I came home from work and there was this amazing table with a round base and a round top and the centre bit is kind of like a stylised [religious figure] form. It's absolutely gorgeous and he'd obviously put so much work into it, polished it beautifully, it was just absolutely stunning.

TB: So what kind of wood is it made out of?

I17: Um, it's stained dark so I'm not sure - I think it might be pine, I can't remember what he made it in but he stained it dark so it's quite dramatic-looking...piece.

TB: So how often would you say you use...

I17: I mean it's out in the living room so literally I see it every single day, several times a day, it's there all the time just as a like little reminder of our faith if you like, and um, it gets dusted semi-regularly when I remember to do it, and um there are 8 main [religious] festivals in the year so, um, for each of those 8 - it's about every month and a half, they sort of - everything comes off the altar, it gets changed, certain aspects of it get changed to sort of represent the new festival, so um that's-

TB: So how long have you had that for?

I17: I've had that for - when did he give it to me, 2012 I think or 2013, so six or seven years I've had that for now?

TB: Okay. And if you could sum up why that's important for you?

I17: Um, I mean it's important because it's, a symbol of my faith and that sort of thing, and also the fact that my husband made it for me and he just put so much work and love and care into doing it for me.

TB: And how does it feel when you use the altar?

I17: I mean it's just a sort of a, really spiritual, kind of, nice feeling and a feeling of love knowing that it was made for me. And literally nobody else has one the same cuz he made it for me, so *[laughs]* it's unique, yeah, exactly.

TB: And how do you feel you would feel if that was lost or broken?

I17: I mean, again, guilty because he spent all that time I on. I mean he could make me another one, I know that he could and he would if something happened to it, yeah, but this is the first one, this is the original one, so it would be really upsetting.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, were there any objects that also came to mind or were those the main -

I17: I think those were the main 2 that we'll go with, yeah.

TB: Yeah. Um, so, do you consider yourself the-the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I17: Very much so, yes, definitely. Yeah.

TB: And what do you feel- is there a particular reason you're attached to objects or do objects have a particular importance for you?

I17: Um...I think a lot of the time it's the experiences you've had with a particular object, so like if you've taken it somewhere special or if it was given to you by, by somebody significant. I think that's probably the reason. I wouldn't necessarily be attached to a plate in the kitchen, for example *[laughs]*, but you know, a pendant that my Mum gave me, for example, is important to me, so that's I think, that's why, I think that's where, I think that's where the attachment comes from really.

Transcript: Interview 18

Date: 12/08/2019

Length of interview: 7 minutes 11 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I18: Interviewee 18

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does, uh, do any come to mind?

I18: Um, probably, um, probably my clarinet.

TB: Okay.

I18: Um, so I've had the one I currently own, I think I've had since I was probably about...14 or 15? Um, and yeah, I, I've kind of carried with it, with it, uh, I've carried it with me through kind of all, all my years at university, and loads of different bands and orchestras, and even though I don't necessarily kind of get it out and play it as much as I should, I still, it's probably, yeah, it's probably one of the things I own that's the most kind of emotionally meaningful for me.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So, um, cuz I don't really know much about clarinets, do they have like a 'shelf life' as it was, or can-can they kind of last a lifetime if you care for them properly?

I18: Um, yeah, I think there's basically no limit to how long you can, can really keep it for. Um...

TB: So have you played clarinet for a very long time then?

I18: Yeah, since I was 11 years old.

TB: Okay. And did you get - so this isn't your first clarinet?

I18: Uh, this is the first one that I've actually owned, so for the first couple of years I was renting one from my music teacher, and then when I, um, when it sort of, you know, when I realised that I was actually quite serious about playing it, it wasn't just a, y'know, silly thing to try out, then I decided - well, my parents were very generous and then bought me the first one but they kind of thought, y'know, we can see that this is a serious thing for you.

TB: Oh okay. Um, so if you could sum up why this object is important to you, how would you sum it up?

I18: Um...I guess it, because it represents, um, a lot of kind of really really positive memories for me, um, sort of about, um, kind of, um, sort of like teamwork and being part of a bigger kind of band and orchestra and kind of, um, having a kind of artistic and creative side to me that I don't always necessarily get as many chances to kind of, have an outlet for.

TB: Oh, okay. So what kind of, what kind of size is it?

I18: Um, so, the box that it's in is kind of a, sort of looks a bit like a very small briefcase. It's maybe sort of *[gesturing, hands about 30cm apart]* this big? And clarinet-I don't know if you've ever seen it before but it's kind of, you can take it apart and store it? Um, so it's got a kind of blue, kind of plush lining, and all the different components stored away in there.

TB: And you have to buy different reeds for it?

I18: Yeah.

TB: Okay. So how often would you say that you use it now?

I18: Oh boy, um *[both laugh]*. Generally, um, I use it a lot when we've kind of rehearsing for, um, a particular show so that will be maybe once a week for about, for about a term? But outside those rehearsals, um, basically almost never *[laughs]*.

TB: Just more time, and yeah, okay. And how do you, how do you feel when you use it?

I18: Um...just, um, kind of like I can sort of block out everything else. So, um, y'know, when we're rehearsing or actually just performing a piece, um, I just focus 100% just on the music,

and thinking about the notes and sort of, all the thought that goes into how to actually play and perform it, so sort of, everything else kinda gets shut out a bit, which is a nice feeling sometimes.

TB: How does it feel to play? I don't know what you call them - keys, or tabs, or-?

I18: Yeah, keys.

TB: Um, are they metal, or-?

I18: Yeah, they're metal.

TB: And what's the clarinet itself made of?

I18: Uh, ooh...I think it's supposed to be...a certain kind of wood. Like, it's sort of black, but I think that might be a sort of paint or varnish on it.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. And what would you say is your favourite thing about, about, about the clarinet or about playing the clarinet?

I18: Uh...probably just that it makes you, it makes you feel quite skilful when you do it, um, the sort of having to juggle so many things at the same time in terms of getting the notes right, the kind of, the way that you're playing it, and having to also think about where you are in relation to the rest of the, the band around you so making sure you're in time with everything. It just, it feels like a very...um, kind of, yeah, very like a craft or a skill.

TB: So when you, cuz you said that you play it regularly during term and then you've got concerts and I assume you're part of a band, or a orchestra?

I18: Yeah.

TB: So, is it quite - the, the sort of case that you have, is it quite hefty or is it fairly portable?

I18: It-it's fairly portable, um, it tends to be little bit unwieldy cuz it's, it's quite bulky even though it's small, if that makes sense? Uh, so I tend to, um, try and shove it into a backpack or something when I carry it round cuz that's just a bit easier.

TB: Yeah, yeah, okay. Um, so where is the object right now?

I18: Uh, right now it's, um, kind of, um, on a, on a shelf in our, in our dining room.

TB: And how do you think you would feel if it was lost or broken?

I18: Um...I think, weirdly even though it's an object which does have a lot of emotional attachment to me, I think I would see it as something replaceable? So I'd want to get a new one, very very soon, um, if I lost it, but I wouldn't necessarily see the, like, the individual object itself as irreplaceable if that makes sense?

TB: Yeah, yeah. So is it-is it more-what's important is what it represents -

I18: Yeah.

TB: - as opposed to the actual object itself?

I18: Yeah.

TB: Oh okay, okay. So when I asked you to think about an object, were there any others that came to mind?

I18: Um, I guess the first one was probably my - the other one aside from my clarinet was my laptop?

TB: Okay.

I18: Um, but I think for that it was more, maybe less emotional attachment and more just because so much of my work, my kind of leisure, um, all of that is taking place on there and through that? So, I think that would be one of the ones, if I, if I lost it, it would be much more of the kind of irreplaceable, because then I'd be, even though I've tried to back up as much of the stuff as possible, it'd still be a, a lot that would go, and it would be quite hard to replace.

TB: Yeah. Okay. So, overall do you consider yourself the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I18: Um, not at all. I, I tend to be very heartless about kind of throwing out, or donating to charity stuff I don't really like anymore.

Transcript: Interview 19

Date: 12/08/2019

Length of interview: 15 minutes 11 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I19: Interviewee 19

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think about an object, which has a lot of value to you, or which means a lot to you, does a particular object come to mind?

I19: Yeah. There is one from, ah, the past, my childhood, um, it's a stuffed toy. You know, stuffed animal *[laughs]*, quite common you know, for a kid. This pink bunny. I don't know, there wasn't something particularly, particularly special about it, but it is, it is the story around this, this toy. Because, it wasn't mine, or at least I thought it wasn't, back then, and, um, used to be my, uh, in my aunt's room, my mother's sister, we've always been close to, we've always been quite close to her. And, back then she was living with my grandparents, and I was there all the time, because yeah both my parents were working, y'know, full-time, didn't have time- didn't have money, were unable to afford a nanny, so I wasn't there a lot. And I liked, I liked this toy, I used to play with it, ah, all the time, for some reason, I don't know why exactly, it just, I liked it. Eh, so, then, uh, my aunt gave it to me as a gift for my graduation, uh, uh, for my graduation, and I remember, uh, I was quite, I was quite moved, y'know, but I-I felt also quite bad, because I didn't want to accept it, because it was something that I thought it was really important for her, so uh, I-I dunno, I felt weird, kind of weird about having it. And then, I remember it, and then she asked "So, you don't remember, do you?" and then she told me the story, um, the story about this toy, that was actually mine -

TB: Oh really?

I19: - I couldn't remember it was mine, and I gave it to her, um, because she was, what I perceived sad, she was sad so I kind of, I gave it to her as a way to, you know, kind of, uh, cheer her up a little bit? So, yeah, and it was - it was my favourite toy, I gave it to her, and then she told me, obviously I didn't know-I didn't know back then, but she was going through a very rough patch back then, she was struggling with depression so it was a really kind of, you know, bad moment for her and the fact that I gave-gave this toy to her, she was so-she was so important for her, so she kinda wanted to give it back to me, after all those years, all those years as a kind of a thank you, you know, for the - oh my god, yeah it was so, it was so "Awwwww" *[both laugh]*, I felt so touched, it was really, it was really...emotional moment for me, kind of, and we bonded, we bonded over this thing even more, you know, we've always been pretty close but I think that thing made us even closer, yeah. So, uh...

TB: So do you still have it today?

I19: Yeah, I still have it! And, uh, not here, it's in my house in [country] so I don't have it here but yeah I still have it *[laughs]*, so yeah, so fond of that toy, and...

TB: So is it soft and -?

I19: Yeah, it's soft. But it is not particularly - it's soft, it's nice, but y'know, now it's kind of old, obviously, raggedy, but back then yeah, I don't remember why I liked it so much, because I had, I had other toys, you know, other stuffed animals that were even fluffier *[laughs]* than that one, but I dunno, I felt particularly connected with that specific toy.

TB: Oh, okay. Ah. So is it quite a, was it quite a small -?

I19: Yeah it's small, it's like *[gesturing]* this big, yeah it's not that big, kind of teeny-tiny.

TB: And when you used to play with it as a child, did you sort of take it around with you, or -?

I19: Yeah, it was with me all the-I used to take with me all the time, everywhere *[laughs]*, walking around the house, y'know, having it with me when I was hiding, so yeah.

TB: Ah, okay. So if you were to kind of, try to sum up why the object is important, why would you - why, why would you say it's important to you?

I19: Well I think because, it represents something, it represents, well, it represented this strong bond that I have with, with my aunt and a person that is really important for me, is really important in my life. And also, I think it's important for me because, I don't know, yeah, as I said, it's a testimony of that bond, because it's, even back then, of course I was too, I was too young to understand, to fully understand what was going on, you know, but I felt that something wasn't right, I felt that she was sad, she was somehow struggling, and I wanted to, to make her feel better, so we kinda have this connection, even though, even though it was kind of, it was on an unconscious level I think, for me, back then. I couldn't even realise it.

TB: So do you ever, like nowadays, do you ever get it out and look at it, or does it stay in 1 place?

I19: No, it just stay in 1 place, it's my room and it stay there. Still there, you know, after all these years, and it's probably gonna stay there, well, forever, until my parents decide to *[both laugh]* sell the house and move, maybe?

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So how would you feel if, how would you feel if it was lost or broken?

I19: Oh, yeah, I would be, I think, for that specific, for that object I would be...I would be heartbroken. Because I have lost a lot of things, objects, in my life, I used to live in a lot of places so I moved a lot and, you know, every time something went lost, and I lost a lot of, kind of, I lost a lot of precious memories, actually, so I always feel sad about it, but for that specific object I would be, yeah, that would be really bad, yeah, really really bad. So maybe that's the reason it's - why I never moved it from my room at my parents' house - maybe, maybe it was an unconscious, kind of unconscious, choice, to be sure that I never *[laughs]*, that I could never lose it, maybe?

TB: So when I asked you to think about an object at the start, was it very clear that the bunny was the first thing that came to mind, were there any other things that came to mind?

I19: Mmmm...ooh, yeah, uh *[laughs]* this is so cliché considering that I am an archaeologist, but it's about my trowel! *[laughs]* Super cliché, I know! But, uh, I just, I was thinking about it the other day, cuz for the very first time in my life, I don't know where it is. I always used to know where it is exactly because it's, well, it's not, it's more than a tool, I think, it's part - or at least it used to be a part of who I am. And...yeah I realised the other day I don't know where it is, I thought I have it with me here, but no, so maybe it's...at my house in [country], it's in my parents' house, I don't know, and maybe it's because it's the f- I'm not doing fieldwork this year, and it's the first time for, for a very long time, I think it's the first time since 2004 that I don't do fieldwork. And, yeah, I'm - so yeah, this - my trowel was a very important - is, I think, it still is, a very important object for me because in a way, kind of defines who I am, or at least what I used to be, since now, so field archaeologist. And, so I just - maybe because I got a call from one of my colleague that - a, a really close friend - she's there, she's in [country] doing fieldwork, and she was telling me "Ohhh, you know, we found this, this and that, and this came out, and a lot of amazing discoveries" so I feel, you know, I feel a bit sad, nostalgic, kind of, kind of homesick, because I used to, I used to think of [country] as a second home, to me, since I've been working there for a very long time. So...maybe, I think that...maybe the fact that I, for the very first time, I'm not sure where this object is located, and the fact that maybe I don't care...so much-or as much as I used to? You know, made me think about it, because I used to be a field archaeologist, now it's not that I'm not but I, uh, maybe I'm something more, something else? So, I dunno, is exciting, is scary at the same time. Yeah.

TB: It's making you think about how you're changing as a person.

I19: Yeah, yeah, that's it. It's just - yeah, I was like "Oh my God, where is it?" *[laughs]* I was all going through my stuff like, here, in our apartment, yeah I was like "Oh my God it's not here, where is it? Did I lose it? Where is it?" So, I thought, maybe tomorrow I'll call my mum *[laughs]* to see if it's at their place for some reason, I don't know!

TB: So, overall, would you consider yourself the kind of person who's attached to objects?

I19: Um...I wasn't, I-I think I, I've become one. Uh, yeah, I wasn't as attached to objects as I am right now. I used to be more, I don't know, careless about obj-I used to think that there weren't so, they weren't so important, they were just, you know, objects, but not now. I'm becoming particularly attached to, you know, certain objects, that are, especially because the-the-the type of objects that trigger memories, important memories of my past. So, yeah, I-I'm becoming one *[laughs]*.

TB: So what do you think - if you think anything at all about it - what, what do you think might be behind that change?

I19: Mmm...I dunno, maybe - well, one thing, one thing is maybe because I, I'm getting older. That's one reason why. So I'm getting, I want to be, to be surrounded by memories and objects that can, objects that can remind me of something, from my past - or, or present, the same, but yeah, maybe that. Or maybe because, yeah, maybe because, as I said, over the years I lost a lot of...objects, uh, pictures in particular, yeah, I lost a lot of, uh, pictures, especially one from my graduation. And, uh, back then it wasn't such a big deal for me, maybe because I-I think because I was, the memory was fresh, you know, it wasn't-it wasn't so distant in the past, but now, uh, as the years passing by, I've, yeah, I regret that, I feel sad about the idea of not having, you know, this particular object that can kind of remind me of part of, my past, part of who I am basically. So, yeah, I think...

TB: So what do you think, what would you like to happen to the pink bunny - w-would you like to give it to someone else, or-or over time would you want to keep it with you?

I19: Ahh...I dunno. I feel, right now, I want to keep it *[laughs]*, but yeah, I wouldn't mind, I wouldn't mind in the future, to give it to, to someone else for, for, for that to, for that kind of rite of passage you know to be meaningful, to, and to, yeah, to, to create and maybe share a stronger bond with someone else in my life. Maybe, I think - ha. Yeah, I think if - I would love to, uh, to give it to my cousin, you know, and son, yeah.

TB: Oh, okay, that's lovely *[laughs]*.

I19: Yeah I would like to give it to him. They, they both, they both have gone through a very rough patch recently so I think that, yeah, it would be meaningful, you know, it would be really meaningful...*[laughs]* to continue the cycle of this pink bunny! Beginning again *[laughs]*. Yeah, as a way to encourage people, you know, cheer them up, make them feel things will get better eventually.

Transcript: Interview 20

Date: 13/08/2019

Length of interview: 6 minutes 7 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I20: Interviewee 20

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value to you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I20: Um, like I said just now, the moon, to me, for some reason?

TB: Okay, okay. And um, why-why the moon in particular?

I20: Um, not sure why since I also have an emotional connection to it. Like, when it's a clear sky you see the moon shining brightly - maybe it's related to how it's the light and the dark basically, and it kinda gives me hope, it clears my mind sometimes, just-staring at it? On a clear sky. And, um, it kinda tells me...or just shows me like, you know, there's always hope, there's always, yeah, um...uh, just like never give up really.

TB: So how long have you felt a connection?

I20: Um, since I was a kid, really. Until now, even nowadays, when it shines really brightly, yeah, I just sit there and look at it for quite a long time.

TB: And so you said it makes you feel calm?

I20: Calm, yeah. And peaceful, yeah.

TB: Okay. Um, so is there a particular - can you, can you kind of remember why or when you first felt a connection to the moon? Was there a particular story behind it?

I20: Um, not really, I-I guess it's quite natural. Um, there wasn't any reason why, or what, um, no-no reason why I suddenly like it. It's just, something I find peace in, and when I'm stressed most of the times I just look at it, cuz uh it's just quite peaceful, and...yeah.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so how often - this may be a difficult question to quantify but how often would you say you look at the moon?

I20: Um, whenever the sky is clear really. I always try to find it, um, mostly - well, mostly every day. But if the sky is, cloudy, so...well, I try to find it, mostly every day.

TB: And is there anyone in your family who feels this connection to the moon or is this quite unique to you?

I20: Um, I think it's quite unique to me. I don't think, yeah [*laughs*].

TB: And - this is kind of a difficult one, but I often ask people when they choose an object "How would you feel if it were lost or broken?" but I guess with the moon it's quite different.

I20: Let's say we don't have...

TB: I mean, I guess we could also say you know, how would you feel if your connection to the moon was lost or broken?

I20: Lost, yeah. Um, oh this is quite hard, I might have to think a bit, um...yeah you'd feel a bit lost and it would be quite hard to find something to replace it? Even if you find something else, it's obviously not the same. Cuz you, you have, um, a lot of connections with it, because sometimes I talk to myself when I look at the moon. Um, yeah, you would lose a lot of memories, then start fresh, but it wouldn't be the same.

TB: Do you have anything that kind of, reminds you of the moon? Do you have any charms or anything that...?

I20: Charms?

TB: Or, I don't know, items...

I20: Um...not really, I don't, yeah.

TB: So the moon on its own is enough?

I20: Yeah. It's enough, yeah.

TB: So when I asked you to think about an object, did any others come to mind?

I20: Mmm...it would be photos for me *[laughs]*, yeah. Definitely photos, um. I take a lot of pictures.

TB: And what do you take pictures of?

I20: Sceneries. Rather than, like, people or myself. I take pictures of sceneries, places I've been to, um, buildings, yeah, architecture, um, even like rocks or sand or something interesting.

TB: Like nature?

I20: Yeah.

TB: And do you consider yourself the kind of person who is attached to objects or not?

I20: Um...to a few - not a lot of objects, just, yeah, just one or two.

TB: Yeah, yeah.

I20: Like, I know a lot of people are attached to their phones, but I'm not. I'm attached to the photos, that's what I care about, um, so, yeah, not a lot, just maybe a couple...of people?

TB: Yeah. And what is important about the people in your life?

I20: The people in my life? What is important?

TB: Yeah - like why, why are you attached to them? People?

I20: Mmm...just, y'know, sharing love, happiness, laughter and memories as well, uh, which is just quite important, and I think it's quite natural for humans to socialise cuz we would get quite lonely, um...yeah, um, just sharing feelings and y'know, consoling in each other and, yeah.

TB: Yeah. So if you were - just to sum up, if you were to try and sort of try to sum up why the moon is important to you, how would you try and sum it up?

I20: Um, it's kinda like a friend to me, that I talk to when I'm down, or feeling stressed cuz, like I said before, it's like the light and the dark, um, uh, it kinda gives me hope sometimes, tells me not to give up, and, when, yeah, in a stressful situation, or...um, a low point in my life.

Transcript: Interview 21

Date: 13/08/2019

Length of interview: 7 minutes 11 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I21: Interviewee 21

Transcript:

TB: So if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does one come to mind?

I21: Yes.

TB: And what is this object?

I21: It's, uh, I suppose it's a little piece of paper that, um - so um, my grandad always used to say before we went to bed, "Night night, God bless, love you", um, and I don't know when, but it was something my Mum started to say to me after he died, and so when I first moved out to university when I was 18, she wrote it on a little piece of paper and tucked it under my pillow so I could find it on the first night and it's just, the little piece of paper I've carried with me, to all the different homes I've been in, it's been pinned by my bed or something, just - you know, it's just nice to have there.

TB: Yeah, yeah. So how long have you had it now then?

I21: It'd be about...5 years? But it's been to Exeter with me, it's been to Birmingham with me, it's been all the way to Canada, it-it's been some places.

TB: Yeah, yeah. Um, so I can see it's a, like a, just a normal white piece of paper, I can see what looks like blue tack marks on the back?

I21: Yes, yeah, cuz at one point there was no pinboard and it had to be stuck on a wall.

TB: Okay -

I21: The blue tack is long gone, there's a bit still on there, but now it gets pinned.

TB: And there's a pinhole in the top, and you're not doing different pinholes, it's just always in the same hole -

I21: It's the first time it's been pinned, actually. I probably will now to be honest with you keep it with just one hole in it, but it is the first time it's been pinned.

TB: Oh, okay. And I can see it's getting a little dog-eared at the edges, yeah, and that's probably just from, over time -

I21: Being pinned up, probably.

TB: Yeah, yeah. Um, so why does this object have value for you?

I21: You know what, it was quite interesting, because it wasn't until I said I'd come and talk to you that I really thought about it much. Um, I think it's, the sentiment of the sort of family saying, if you will, and I just remember being really touched that my Mum left it for me on my first proper night away from home. And so, I can't say I look at it every day, it's not something I interact with every day, but it's just something I like to know is there, cuz it's a little piece of my Mum wherever I am, kind of thing.

TB: *[pointing to word at bottom of paper]* And what does 'mañana' at the end mean?

I21: *[laughs]* Right, so, I um, took Spanish and A-level, and so, it means, uh, 'morning' or 'tomorrow' in Spanish, so it's something my Mum has tacked on the end of the little saying, meaning like 'See you tomorrow' kind of thing, it's just like a family, little, joke, um, meaning we'll see you in the morning, see you tomorrow, kind of thing. Um, so it's just, I quite like that she put that on there because it's added our generation, to it? If you see what I mean. But I just - like I say, I don't interact with it every day, I don't, you know, touch it before bed at night or anything, I just like sometimes like to look at it and know it's there.

TB: Yeah. How often do you think you look at it? I mean, it might be difficult to quantify that, but...

I21: Um, actively look at it? Every couple of days. But because of - because of, it's behind my bed, I probably see it, y'know, a couple of times a day. But I wouldn't say I act-I actively think about it every couple of days.

TB: Are there particular circumstances or particular times at which you tend to look at it a bit more?

I21: Um, I would probably say, because, I mean, this is how extra my family is, we also text each other 'goodnight' as well, so I will sometimes look at it before I go to bed as a trigger to text my Mum or sometimes she'll text it to me first, I'll then look at it. I always tend to go for it as well if I can't sleep, cuz it's that little reminder of - cuz, I had this thing when I was younger, this is a bit off-topic, but where I really had trouble sleeping, and so my Mum used to tell me "it's not a big deal, you'll just be tired tomorrow". So if I struggle sleeping, uh, it's just that connection to her I guess? Again, I only sort of started thinking about this when I was thinking about what I'd say, but um, I wonder if it's that sort of subconscious connection to her, that she always told me not to worry if I couldn't sleep, so I look at something she left me about sleep?

TB: Oh okay, that's interesting. Um, so how would you feel if this was lost or broken?

I21: Um, I, I would be sad about it because it's been with me for so long, um, and it's quite interesting because if I lost it, I think she'd just write me another one, so a - I don't know, I would be sad about it because that one's been on the journey with me, but I suppose it's different because it is a replaceable object, if you see what I mean? It's, it's got sentimental value but I think that's the words on it rather than the physical object. But, I mean there must be a reason I've kept hold of this specific one for so long, um. But I think, I like that it's been with me everywhere so I would be quite sad if it wasn't there anymore.

TB: And how does it make you feel, um, looking at it, or reading the words?

I21: It-it's just that connection to home, I-I'm an only child, so - you don't have to be an only child to be very close to your parents but I think I, I've always sort of grown up with my parents sort of being my friends, as well? So, I think it's just, it's our little thing, and it makes, I dunno, ah, it makes me feel a little bit closer to them when I'm far away. So I suppose it, it-I go the other way, it doesn't make me sad to look at it, that I'm not with them, it brings me comfort, I guess.

TB: Oh okay, okay. So when I asked you to think about an object, did any other objects come to mind?

I21: Yeah, there were a couple that I thought I could bring with me. They all had that sort of sentimental attachment to them, though, photographs, or bits of jewellery that were my grandma's, you know, that kind of thing. I'm not, I'm not overly attached to...like, modern trinkets, if you will, they all sort of had those sentimental, had them for years, value.

TB: Oh, okay, so objects with a history?

I21: Yes. That's what - I think, in a way, if they did get lost, are much more difficult to replace than, y'know, an iPhone charger or something.

TB: Yeah, yeah. So do you consider yourself the type of person who is attached to objects?

I21: Sentimental objects, definitely. If, uh, it sounds stupid as well, but, if something's got a face - I know it's silly, but I've still got in my cupboard all my old teddy bears from when I was little, cuz I can't bring myself to get rid of them, because they've been with me on my journey, they've got a face, um, but yeah no I'm definitely sentimental over things that hold memories, but I'm - I find it quite easy to get rid of clothes and...so some objects, yeah.

TB: So those teddy bears - do you ever get them out, or are they very hidden away?

I21: Um, I do get them out from time to time - where they're kept, it's not very convenient to get them out, but I do from time to time like to bring them out and look at them. Um, it's...it is a bit of a weird thing, but I find it quite difficult to put them back once I get them out, I'm a little bit like that. Um, so I get them out from time to time. But the number of times I've got them out to do a cull, if you will, and to say "Right, I really don't need these" and then they all end up going back in the cupboard, I can't bring myself to get rid of them.

Transcript: Interview 22

Date: 13/08/2019

Length of interview: 16 minutes 21 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I22: Interviewee 22

Transcript:

[Prior to interview, I22 got out her object: a clarinet].

TB: So is it, um, I assume it's made of wood? It looks like -

I22: It is made of cocus wood.

TB: Oh, okay.

I22: Which is, quite rare for clarinets, they're usually made of a wood called blackwood, but this one, which is an old one, is a cocus wood clarinet.

TB: Oh, okay.

I22: With silver keys.

TB: Did you, um, pick this particular wood or did you just, um, w-was it a gift, or did you buy it for yourself?

I22: Uh...none of those things. I was originally taught the clarinet by [teacher's name] who was a world-famous clarinettist, but also a member of staff in [I22's workplace] and he was a friend of mine, we used to do words and music projects together, and he was, uh, paraplegic, so when he went abroad which he often did cause he was performing all over the world, ah, he would take a, a friend or relation with him to, to help him, and I was one of, one of those helpers so I got to know him really, really well and of course, what one was helping him with was, uh, musical tours, so I got to hear the complete clarinet repertoire as well, so - wonderful. And, one day, out of the blue, he said to me "Shall I teach you the clarinet?" and, I didn't really take it, take it sort of seriously but he meant it and, and, ah he turned up with this clarinet, which he had chosen for me. And it's a clarinet which comes with a tragic story. Uh, it belonged, before it was mine, to a young man named [man's name] who was a brilliant clarinettist - he'd been one of [my teacher's] pupils uh, and he got leukaemia and died in his, died in his 30s, and this was one of his clarinets.

TB: Oh, okay.

I22: And, uh, [my teacher] asked his mother if she would sell it to me and she wrote me a lovely letter wishing me luck with my career! Cuz she didn't realise I wasn't a sort of normal - music student. So, I always knew this was a clarinet which belonged to someone who was a great clarinettist and also absolutely, absolutely loved the, loved the instrument. But it was only a great deal later that I, that I learned that he was the clarinettist for whom [composer], uh, wrote an amazing piece called [name], which I now have the score of, and it has a little

photograph of him and a little, a little account of his, his, his life. Uh, so, it's a clarinet that already comes with a story attached. Uh, I was 40 years old, the last time I had played a wind instrument - I used to play, uh, tenor recorder when I was in my teens, and uh, [teacher] turns up with an instrument - and normally you, you, you learn clarinet, you learn the lower register first, ah, and you don't get what's called 'over the break', the upper register for, uh, for ages, but [teacher] being [teacher], uh, the first note he taught me to play was the top E on the lower register, and then he showed me how to move my thumbs so that I was playing, uh, the top B on the upper register.

TB: Oh, okay. So why is that they usually teach the lower register first?

I22: Because it's easier.

TB: Oh, okay, cuz I know almost nothing.

I22: But [teacher], [teacher] didn't know about 'easy'.

TB: So what are these you're putting on now?

I22: They are called LefreQues, and they - what they do, is they carry the sound across the divides in the instrument, so that you get a better, you get a better sound. They're a fairly recent invention and the person who teaches me now, who is called [new teacher] and was one of [teacher]'s very last students, uh, before [teacher] died, he discovered about these, and he, he, he uses them and he told me about them, and they actually improve the, the sound of the instrument.

TB: Oh, okay. So how long have you had this particular clarinet?

I22: I've had this particular clarinet, I got it when I was 40 and I am now 72. But I stopped - [teacher] taught me for 8 or 9 years, uh, and then I stopped playing because I got arthritis in my hands, uh but after [teacher] died which was when I'd just retired, uh, I thought, he spent all those years teaching me, uh, and, uh, he taught me for free, it was masterclass teaching as a gift, uh, and I thought I've, I've let that go. Uh, and I thought I'd see whether, despite the arthritis, I could still play. So I, I thought in that case I need a teacher and I looked online and found [new teacher]'s details and that he had been one of [teacher]'s students so I, I phoned him up and he was delighted to teach someone who'd originally been taught by his old teacher, and he's been, he's been teaching me now for the last nearly 6 years.

TB: Oh okay. So how often do you play the clarinet?

I22: Every day.

TB: Every day. And how do you - I mean, how does it make you feel when you play it?

I22: It depends. It can be very frustrating, because my hands and getting worse, a-and the thing that really causes problems is *[pointing]* that key because I have to have my thumb at an angle that it doesn't want to be at, and actually my clarinet - this is called the speaker key, it - they're going to be altered by a brilliant clarinet maker and restorer in Cambridge, goodness knows what it's going to cost, so they'll take that off and put a different one on that my thumb is in a more comfortable, uh, comfortable angle. So that can be, that can be frustrating. I'm also trying to play pieces that are slightly too, slightly too difficult for me *[laughs]* which can also be frustrating but it can also be, particularly if you're, uh, playing duets, can be very, can be very satisfying. That's one of the pieces that I'm learning.

TB: Oh, this is one of my favourite songs.

I22: And this is one that I learned a while ago and am now going to go back to. And there's the copious notes in [new teacher]'s, [new teacher]'s teaching of me. But I have, now, uh, just started playing recorders again, which I did when I was, was in my teens, because I thought if my hands get much worse, recorders might be, might be easier, but it would be terrible not to be able to play the clarinet anymore.

TB: Absolutely. Oh, this is one of my absolute favourite songs. Um.

I22: It's one of my favourite songs too!

TB: It's absolutely lovely. Um, no, I love Debussy. He's great *[laughs]*. Thank you for showing me that! Um, so how would you feel if the clarinet was lost or broken?

I22: Heartbroken. If the house was on fire, that's the thing I would grab, ah, and the last time I saw, I saw [new teacher] and told him I was going to be in your project and said that to him, ah, and he said about the Whaley Bridge dam -

TB: Yes, yes.

I22: - ah, and I said if I'd been one of those people that had 15 minutes, I would have left the house with 1 pair of pants and a toothbrush and 2 clarinets *[both laugh]*. A-and this, I mean,

my recorders, if my recorders were lost, it wouldn't matter at all - apart from money and insurance hassle, because they're all completely replaceable. *[Pointing to clarinet]* That is irreplaceable, uh, both because you'd be very unlikely to find another one like it, uh, and because it was the clarinet that, that [teacher] chose for me. Uh, there is a, it had a crack which he mended, you can barely see it, yes there -

TB: Oh yes, yeah.

I22: And when I had it, uh, the clarinet sort of...overhauled by the-these clarinet place in-in-in Cambridge, I didn't want them to make that invisible, and they didn't, because th-that's work that [teacher], [teacher] put into the clarinet for me.

TB: Yes, so you said that you had 2 clarinets, so um -

I22: That's a B-flat clarinet and the other one is an A.

TB: So this one is lower?

I22: No, this one is higher. The A-the A clarinet is lower, you start learning on the B-flat clarinet but the A clarinet is what Mozart used for the, or rather he used a-an earlier form of the clarinet called th-the Basset clarinet which has been brought back, uh, partly through [teacher]'s researches, uh, but uh you have to, you have to use a clarinet in A for the clarinet quintet and the clarinet concerto by Mozart. Uh, and the, there are various other, various other things that-that you need a clarinet in A for but you particularly need it for, for those things which are the sort of summit of uh clarinet, clarinet writing.

TB: Oh, okay. And is this your favourite one to play?

I22: It doesn't quite work like that because, because you have to be playing the one that is right for the piece that you're playing, but if it was a question of, with the house on fire, I could only grab one of my clarinet cases, this is the one I'd grab, cuz it was my first clarinet and it was the, the sort of beginning of me being a, beginning of me being a clarinettist but also because it's, it's physically very beautiful, uh, while my A clarinet, which is a blackwood clarinet, just, uh - which is an old one, and also has beautiful, beautiful tone, but it-it doesn't have the sort of physical, physical beauty that that - I mean if you look at all the, the keys, they are very very beautiful, it's a bit sad that the speaker key is going to be replaced, but it'll be, it'll be replaced by someone who will design it so that it, it still looks, looks right.

TB: It's very clever that they can modify them in that way as well.

I22: But they, but they, th-they, the whole needs to come off because, uh, eventually it will have to be put back again. Ah, when I die, [new teacher] will have my clarinets, I have it written into, into my will that, that he will, he will have my clarinets. Cuz they were [teacher]'s clarinets and [teacher] was his teacher.

TB: Ah, it's nice to pass it onto someone -

I22: Yeah.

TB: - that they mean something to. So if you could sort of sum up why this is important to you, why this has value to you, if you could sort of sum up why, how-how would you -?

I22: Well, it has value to me in, in different ways. I mean, on the one hand this connection with my past and with somebody who was important to me in the past and somebody who is important to me in the present, uh, but also, uh, I love clarinet music, the clarinet repertoire is something that is very, very dear to my heart and, and even though I am by no means a good clarinettist, playing even badly music that you love, you get really really close to it, you understand how it's been, you understand how, uh, how it's been put together. Uh, so - and it-it's a thing that I use every day, it's part of my - the routine, the routine of my, my everyday life. So, so for all, for all those, for all those reasons.

TB: Mhmm. Oh okay. And you would - so when I said at the start to sort of, if you're going to think of an object which has value to you, does anything come to mind or is it very clearly the clarinets?

I22: I have and love, uh, a miniature Japanese painted screen. I, uh, it's a painting of water birds and a lake and a river and a pine tree and it's painted on gold leaf, uh, it was collected in China, though it's a Japanese screen, it was connected-collected in China by a friend of my parents called [name], she was a Professor of, um, [subject] at, uh, [a university] in [city]. She met my father when she was doing a PhD in [city] in the 1920s. Uh, when I was a little girl she invited me to stay with her in [country] by myself, and took me round different places and introduced me to many people and was an absolutely amazing and wonderful person and, uh, she had lived, uh, in China before the Revolution, and she had in her house Chinese antiquities. One of the things she had was a great big, uh, carved, elaborately carved wooden chest, uh, which would have been cedar wood or camphor wood, uh, and one of the things

was a Mandarin dragon coat, uh, which, uh, I was allowed to dress up in. And, uh, in her old age she started sending me, sending me treasures. Uh, there's a, there's an ivory lady, she's very very beautiful but you can see the curve of the, the curve of the elephant's tusk and I don't have it on display anymore because there's a sort of horror attaching to it, immensely beautiful thing. Uh, and-and the little, little screen, uh, I have in my bedroom, and it's something that I look at every day and it's absolutely beautiful but you couldn't grab it if the house was on fire as it's too fragile.

TB: Yeah.

I22: Uh, it's going to go to, as is the ivory lady, to the Oriental Museum in Durham when I die. Uh, that's also in my will, and the various other, uh, Chinese things that-that Helen gave me are going, going to go there. So, so yes I suppose the, I suppose that Japanese screen just because it's an immensely, immensely beautiful thing but also it was, it was given to me by someone who is very important in my, in my childhood and was an amazing person.

TB: Mhmm. So would you say that, in general, you're the type of person who's attached to objects, or not?

I22: Yes, yes I would. I, one of the things I do is paint and take photographs, uh, I have a painting studio and it's full of still life objects, uh, and some of them are the kind of objects that you would only have as still life objects, you would not have them at home. I mean, animal skulls, uh, and a life mask of Keats are among the, among the things - those are not things I would have at home, but they're important things for, things to, things to draw or arrange for still life photographs.

Transcript: Interview 23

Date: 13/08/2019

Length of interview: 8 minutes 10 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I23: Interviewee 23

Transcript:

TB: Okay, so if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I23: Okay, yeah, so the one - there's 2 really, it's my wedding ring and my engagement ring. Because I think, you said 'value' - to me, that's both sentimental value but also, it's one of the most expensive things - I assume, obviously I don't know how much it costs. Cuz it's made of gold and diamond and sapphire.

TB: So, um, just for the dictophone, could you describe the rings for me?

I23: Yep. So I've got, um, my engagement ring is white gold, it's got a - I don't know the terminology, like a circular diamond, um, and 2 small blue sapphires, and then my wedding ring fits into it, and these were designed by my husband with a friend who's a jeweller.

TB: Oh okay. And if you don't mind my asking, how long have you had them for?

I23: Uhhh, so the - um, so I've had the wedding ring for 5 years, so the engagement ring for nearly 6, I think, yep.

TB: And how do they feel on your finger? Do you find that you don't feel them that much?

I23: Mhmm. Yeah, I think that I don't really notice they're there, but if I forget to put them on, um, it feels a bit weird, even though - the other day I cut my finger and I put a plaster on it *[laughs]* and it felt the same as my wedding ring - I don't know what that says about marriage! *[both laugh]* Um, but so I thought I had it on because I had a plaster on so clearly there is a pressure there but I don't notice it most of the time.

TB: Yeah, yeah. And do you find that you touch it very often?

I23: Um, yes, I think sometimes, um, I fiddle with it. Uh, I don't know in what kind of circumstance it is, um, sometimes when I'm writing on the computer, I take it off, and sometimes actually, um, a few times recently, I've had like-like a fainting spell, and - again this is making marriage sound terrible *[both laugh]* but it's helped to take it off so it was a bit more pressure, I have a lot of blood in my hands, I don't know what was happening, but it definitely helped to take it off. Um, so, but, yeah, I think most of the time I touch it.

TB: And is there a story behind your husband designing it, or - did he design it with you in mind, was there a particular design you liked that he designed it round?

I23: Um...I don't know, really. I think, um, so, he - it was a friend of a friend who is a jewellery designer that he did it with, um, uh, I don't really know, I think...I remember once I came home and he was looking at something on the computer and he, he shut it down very quickly and I wasn't allowed to see it - I thought he was looking at porn *[both laugh]*. Made him have an awkward conversation with me! Um, but, it was, um, the design for this, uh, and I think, um, a sapphire is my birthstone but I don't think he knew that? So, I don't know, I don't know really, but I like it.

TB: Oh, okay, oh good *[both laugh]*. Um, so, this may seem like a very obvious question, but why does it have value to you?

I23: Um, I think, I mean obviously it's partly because this is a gift from my husband, he has a wedding ring he wears that I gave him, um, and we exchanged them during our wedding ceremony. But I think, I think it's more that I wear it every single day, um, so I mean there's been maybe one or two days I've forgotten to put it on, but in general, it's because that - because it's always there.

TB: Oh, fair enough. Um, and how would you feel if the rings were lost or broken?

I23: Um, I think I'd be very upset, uh, I think, though, because of how it was made, I would get another one made, because the, the designer still has the mould. Um, but obviously that would be a big financial *[unclear word]*, um, I don't think I've ever got round to getting it insured so *[both laugh]*, um, yeah, I would be very upset, and it wouldn't feel the same, if it was replaced.

TB: Yeah, yeah, okay. Um, and if I asked you to - when I asked you to think about an object that has value to you, does anything else come to mind or was it very clearly the rings?

I23: Okay so these are the other things that I brought. Um, so, my phone, and I really don't think this is sentimental value, um, because I don't treat it very well *[both laugh]*, it's just, quite an old iPhone, I regularly drop it and smash it and that's very annoying.

TB: Yeah, you can see that mine's got shards in it as well -

I23: *[laughs]* Well this is not repaired because it's the second time recently and I can't really afford to replace the screen so you'd think I'd get a case! Um, but I thought I - well, the other day - last week, I went to visit my brother in *[country]* and our bag got lost by the airline, but

I felt quite zen about that, um, but then I thought I'd lost my phone, which I hadn't, I'd just put it in the wrong pocket of my bag, and I just freaked out, because I was like it's got everything that I need on it, how will they contact me about my bag, it's got access to all my emails, so I think maybe I use it for too much stuff, I don't - so it's important, it has value because it has my diary on it, it's got my work email, so, you know, that's used a lot, but then also that made me think about my passport, um, and that has value in like a practical sense. Uh, and again I think because I was travelling last week it reminded me that I'm pretty lucky to have it, though maybe it's not as valuable soon as it once was! Yeah, so, that's a passport. This *[holding up bag]* is a bit gross *[both laugh]* - this has sentimental value, purely sentimental value, I put it in the bag so you don't have to - these are the, uh, scissors that I cut the umbilical cord with my daughter -

TB: Oh, okay! That's quite unusual that you get - so, did you get to keep them, did you have them before?

I23: Yeah, um so I kept them because, uh, she came out very fast, at home, um and the midwife asked my husband if he wanted to cut the cord and he wasn't very interested, so I said well I'll do it, and she said, um, that's quite fitting cuz you've done it all yourself up to this point *[both laugh]*, so, I think - and cuz they were like home birth midwives I think they were very used to people wanting souvenirs and things so she told me to keep them, so I have. But I don't really look at them ever, and they're, I just, sentimental value.

TB: Where do you keep those at home?

I23: Um, I actually keep them in a box of things that I have for my daughter, um, I don't know if she'll want them *[laughs]*, it has things like when she was baptised, somebody gave her a necklace that obviously she's only, she's not even 3 yet, so she's not gonna wear this little gold necklace, so sort of things that she'll want to look at when she's older, I don't know if she'll want these! But cards and things like that.

TB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And how would you feel if you broke those?

I23: Um...well, they're - these are irreplaceable, because it's just the sentimental value but, I don't know, I don't look at them often, I think I'd just be really annoyed at myself, yeah.

TB: Okay. And would you say overall, if you think about your relationship with objects, and I guess maybe coming from a professional perspective as well, would you say you're the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I23: Mmm, not really, no. Um...I don't know, because I've worked for a museum, and I think about objects a lot, uh, so I think probably compared to some other people that I see, I don't, um, treasure as many things. I don't like that when I move house, there's so much stuff to cart with me so I don't want to build up, uh, lots of piles of useless stuff. Um, so I don't know, I think it was quite obvious that there were these few items I could show you.

Transcript: Interview 24

Date: 13/08/2019

Length of interview: 6 minutes 48 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I24: Interviewee 24

Transcript:

TB: Right, so if I ask you to think of an object which has value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I24: Uh, yes, um, I've got this little, um, A6 notebook at home which is my, well I call it my [husband and I24's names], uh, book, and it's just a little tiny scrapbook of just, like, tickets, uh, little bits of scraps of things that we've done together, all stuck into one place, um, and it's like now bulging at the edges and there's something that, yeah, it, um, I see that as important as it's not something that I'll ever be able to replace really if I did lose it or if something happened to my house, that's, yeah.

TB: So, um, how long have you had it for?

I24: Um...it got given to me about 6 years ago probably? And the person who gave it to me - it was my husband who gave it to me and he started it off with a few photos and things and then I added to it over the years since then.

TB: So I'm trying to think - you said it's A6?

I24: Yeah. That's the smaller one than A5, so about *[gestures]* that size, yeah.

TB: And what does it look like? Is it colourful? Or have you decorated it at all?

I24: Yeah, uh, it's a, um, it was just like a, brown, y'know, brown craft material, um, notebook that was plain, and he'd written 'Book of [husband and I24]' on it but I've also stuck things on the front and it's just, like, bursting with things that I've stuck into it now.

TB: Oh, okay, okay, has it got any space left?

I24: Um, like half a page? *[both laugh]* I've only recently just got it to that point.

TB: Oh, okay. So, so - this is probably an obvious question, but why does it have value to you?

I24: Um, it was - well it's just all the memories obviously, um, of what we've done, um, because I am that sort of person who, if I go anywhere, I pick up bus tickets, I pick up, like, sort of, um, anything that reminds me of things that we've done then it's all in one place. Um, it was particularly important, um, when we were living apart as well, um, cuz it was sort of my thing that whenever, um, er, when he was away, whenever we saw each other and whenever I came home I would put all that stuff we'd done together and then it would make me feel better after, every time I came home without him, um, so, yeah that was the main time it was important.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so how often do you, how often do you look at it, or do you just look at it to put more things in?

I24: It tends to be now when I put more things in, though like I said now it's almost, it's pretty much full, but that when we're apart I looked at it far more, cuz it just - I used to flick through it if I was feeling, like, bad or I was missing him I'd look through it and just be like ah that was nice and it was just a way of making myself feel better.

TB: Oh, okay, okay. So have you had it since the start of your relationship or a fair amount in, or if you were together before you had this, did you have anything that you saved stuff in beforehand?

I24: Um, it was about...I'm trying to think, it-it's not right at the start, it's probably a few years in that he gave it to me for my birthday. Before that, I'd still collected stuff, but it was literally like shoved in, like, a drawer somewhere, um, as, I'm a bit too -so much of a perfectionist about making it look nice that I never actually put it into a book, but he gave me that book and it allowed me to be a bit more, messy with it, so, yeah.

TB: Okay, okay. So you've said that there are - you tend to use it when you're away from him, most of the time. And where is it now?

I24: It is in my, uh, drawer - like in my s-study sort of room, in the desk upstairs in a drawer there.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, and is that where you've kept it for a long time?

I24: It is, yeah, cuz that tends to be where I actually, if, it's, um, I add more things there because I've got *[laughs]* all of my stationery things to add things in, uh so yeah that's where I've had it.

TB: And how would you feel if it was lost or broken?

I24: Uh, I'd be very upset *[both laugh]*. Cuz I can't replace, uh, it's literally year-probably 10 years of collecting things, places that I'll never go back again, I wouldn't be able to tell you everything that's in there. There's, um, in jokes and things in there that I look up now and like I can't remember doing that so I'm never gonna be able to recreate it. Yeah, that - the way I defined importance was, if my house burnt down, what would I be sad about? And I can't replace, that would be one of them, yeah.

TB: So were there any - when I asked you sort of about important objects, were there any others that came to mind?

I24: Um...the - again, it tends - when I was thinking about this, the immediate thing that was really random was this wooden spoon in my kitchen. Um, it is - it used to belong to my nan, I think she got it given to her when she got married in the early 60s, and when she downsized her house she gave it to me cuz she knew I loved cooking and she passed it on to me. And so that's another thing that, yeah, means a lot to me and reminds me of her every time I use it, yeah.

TB: So do you use it often?

I24: Um, yeah, I use it quite a lot - often, it's like, cooking is one of my main hobbies so I do use it a lot. Um, I also - I just really like the actual shape of it, um, you can see just, years - she's been using it, it must be 50 years she was using it for cooking and baking so its misshapen now, it's not actually spoon-shaped, half the, um, edge has come off *[both laugh]* but I still use it cuz it always - it's like a constant reminder of her.

TB: Oh, okay. And would you say you're the kind of person who's attached to objects?

I24: Um...I am in some ways. I tend to be - I realised, I-I think I'm more attached to objects where people have given it to me, so if I've, uh, I've got a lot of things in my house that I've, sort of inherited off different family members, and I - I know I'm really protective about them, more so than things that I've bought myself. So just simple things like a coffee table that I have that, again, belonged to my nan. If I accidentally scratch it or do something to it I'd be really upset, but things that I own I'm just like, ah, oh well.

TB: Oh, okay, it's like the importance of that history.

I24: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

Transcript: Interview 25

Date: 16/08/2019

Length of interview: 22 minutes 19 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I25: Interviewee 25

Transcript:

TB: So, um, if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I25: Um, yeah, quite specifically this axe, which I picked up off a guy, um, in [place] in east [city]. Um, and it's become my go-to tool for every aspect of the woodworking that I do.

TB: Uh huh.

I25: Um, not only is this particular axe incredible because the axe head is from the 1920s, made in Wednesbury in the West Midlands, so it's about 100 and - no, it's nearly 100 years old, it's about 90-odd years old, this axe head. What it actually means for me more broadly is, it-it kinda captures a junction between the boyish fascination with being out in the woods and making stuff and being a bit wild, but also the functional side of things where this has now become a staple in my income. And without it - I could, I could replace it, I could have a different axe and everything but I've got so used to the shape of it, the shape of the axe head, how that's gonna translate into how I hold it and what I'm gonna make from it, so the-my technique has become very - literally ingrained in the design of the axe itself, and the history

of the axe as a material object, just it - you know, the functionality of it is married, like, with the romanticism behind what the axe means more broadly.

TB: Okay, so do you have other axes that you use?

I25: Yeah, I have one, um - actually I've got loads, I've got about 9, 3 that I actually use. The first one that I have, is the first one I ever bought and it's Swedish steel um, a company called Wetterlings, the other one is also by Wetterlings and it's *way* bigger for splitting logs and preparing things on a more rudimentary scale. But this is, um, I would say inherently better, because these new Swedish tools use a different type of steel to the old Sheffield and British steel style. So this keeps a sharper edge, you have to sharpen it less frequently, and it's just generally better than the modern equivalents. Um, so yeah I have, I think 9, just, you know, some that I've just collected cuz they're beautiful old things, uh, 3 that I use regularly, but this one stands out.

TB: Would you say you use this one the most?

I25: Yeah definitely, and I'd say it's probably the tool I use the most in all of woodworking. Um, like everything can be done, basically, with this if I wanted to. If I put my mind to it, 90% of the making of an object could be done with just this tool.

TB: Oh really, so what, even the sort of fairly delicate stuff?

I25: Yeah, so, if you, for example, working with the tool itself, if you wanna split the logs you like hold it down this end, so you've got more of a gravity pulling on the weight and it-it has more power, then right up here if you go into the axe head you've got more control but also if you work - I-I never really realised this until I was making things, like, quite intricately but, the more intricate you go the more you use [*pointing*] this end? I don't know what it is, it's just giving yourself a smaller cutting edge and being up closer to it, you have loads of control so you can get like, I can't really find anything round here to use as an example but, like, you can get right into corners, and do a lot of real subtle detail, but also if you wanted to, whack out big rough shapes. So it's a really versatile tool.

TB: Yeah. So how long have you had it?

I25: Um...about 2 and a half years now? Um -

TB: And how did you - how did you come to get it?

I25: I can't actually remember - no, through eBay, um, I just searched 'vintage axe' and then I realised there was this guy, um - at the time I was living in south [city] and there was this guy who was restoring axes in east [city] and I got in touch - firstly, I-I got in touch cuz I think I specifically searched 'Elwell axes' cuz I've gotten a real sort of, soft spot for this company that didn't recover after the Second World War. They used to be like *the* axes that everyone wanted all around the world and then, um, they didn't recover after all their factories were put aside for the war effort. Um, so I have a real affinity for these axes. I searched for this, I think 'vintage Elwell axe' was what I searched, found this guy that was quite close to me, which is weird in [city] as there's not many woodworkers around, and then the handle is made of ash wood from east [city] as well, so the fact that it was an old axe head, mixed with a modern tree that I could probably have related to somehow as it was vaguely near me, it just happened, it just sort of came to me [laughs].

TB: So how often do you use it?

I25: Every single time I do woodworking which is probably 3 days a week at least. Um, and yeah like I say it is ever-present for a, throughout all woodworking projects that I do, even if I'm turning things on a lathe I rough out the shape of what I'm about to turn with this axe. So even when I'm doing the, the more mechanised, semi-industrialised stuff, it all starts with this particular axe.

TB: Okay. And I guess this may be a weird question to ask but, was there a point at which you realised this was the axe you preferred to use?

I25: Yes, but incidentally, um, I actually - for some reason I held off, from using it for a while, um, I think because of its age I thought of it as an antique, even though it's a perfectly - well, in fact, even though it's a perfectly restored tool, but also it's a better tool than the ones currently made as I was saying earlier on. Um, for some reason it had this kind of mystique that I didn't wanna touch it, and I just wanted to have it for the sake of owning a beautiful old axe. And then, my - it was when I went to [country] for a few months, I took my Swedish axe with me, um, one which could realistically be easily replaced even though it has sentimental value cuz it's the first one, the first tool I ever bought, um, it's a mass-produced axe that I could replace if I wanted to and, it, I didn't take my sharpening stones with me foolishly, so I didn't sharpen that Swedish axe for a month or two, which meant when I got back this one was actually a little bit sharper, so I started to use it and realised that, because of that wider cutting

edge, there was actually more I could do with it, um, with seemingly less effort because, because it's so wide it can remove big chunks of wood, but because it's so curved and delicate here I can also do way more with it. I also took a while to develop the technique for sharpening it cuz every axe is at a slightly different angle and you have to, it takes ages to learn to sharpen something well. When I, when it clicked how to sharpen this, then it just superseded all my other tools cuz it keeps that edge better than any, any of the others.

TB: So, um, I guess if you use a axe over the years, it will blunt and you'll sharpen it again and it'll blunt and you'll sharpen it again, the shape will change -

I25: Yeah, gradually, I guess, over a prolonged, I say, a very long long period of time, it will reduce in size drastically, um, but that I mean, I could imagine happening if people were passing down tools from father to son and over multiple generations but when you sharpen this you're removing such a minimal trace amount of the metal itself it's only visible in the liquid - y-y'know if you're sharpening things with whetstones and you've got water to, to lubricate the steel so it doesn't overheat with friction, you can only really see that you're removing any metal because the water turns this kind of murky, grey colour, you wouldn't actually be able to see bits of metal coming off, but, but yeah over time it does change and people do morph the shape of the axe head to suit their style. This one I grind with, um, a slightly left-handed grip, um, because I - not only am left-handed but, it also means people are less likely to want to borrow it, it's kind of a possess-a possessive thing that most people have with their tools. Um, you have such an intimate relationship with the tools and you do have like, a real bond with them and then when someone wants to borrow them, you know there's inherently going to be less respect, than which, that which you have between the tool and yourself. So having a left-handed grind, makes it even more personable to me.

TB: So when you sharpen it, you mean, you sharpen it in a way that -

I25: I sharpen it more aggressively but also, to more effort on the inside - if I'm holding it with my left hand, to this inside edge, which means it's gonna be very slightly longer here, and a little bit shorter here on this outside, right-hand edge? So most of the chopping work is going to be done with that - I mean, most people just keep them, just level, um, with an equal grind either side, but there's something about having that extra, feature, of it, I guess that makes it even more mine, cuz there's fewer left-handed woodworkers than right-handed.

TB: Yeah. And I guess - okay, this may sound like a strange question, but how does it feel when you're using it?

I25: It feels incredible. Well actually, it feels many different ways most of the time. So it's extremely satisfying when a chop goes well. When this is freshly sharpened as well and the cuts are coming off really cleanly it's great, when you just wanna split things with kindling, or if you're preparing logs for further, uh, conversion and all you're doing is breaking the logs up into separate, uh, separate fractions, that feels incredible because it is so satisfying seeing the immediate effect of your labour, just the sound of like *[clicks tongue]* and then it splits and your work is done and it's physical and it's great, but then it can be infuriating, it can be so stressful, the amount of times I've like - actually no, not with this one, not that I think about it. The amount of times in the past I've had a tool in my hand and-and you just slam it down into the chopping block, uh which doesn't damage it necessarily but it does let off frustration, I don't actually do that with this one, now that I think about it.

TB: Is that because you're not frustrated or you don't want to throw it down?

I25: Because I am still frustrated, yeah, but I don't want to throw it down. I-I love this tool *[laughs]* to treat it like that, um, yeah I think it's like an ego check as well, I guess you could do it with a tool that you could easily replace and it's, I mean, it's not a cool thing to admit, I think a lot of people slam things down when they're frustrated, but this one makes me stop and think, which is that extra level of respect, I-I won't slam this into a chopping block. Um, so it can make me feel great, it can make me feel really satisfied, it can make me feel like a really good woodworker if the cuts are coming off really cleanly, makes you feel great or it can make you feel frustrated and, not sad, yeah, but angry.

TB: Yeah. So if you were to sum up, if you were to sort of sum up why this is important to you, how would you sum it up?

I25: Um, it ultimately defines who I am and what I've become. Uh, because woodworking has meant so much to me, it propelled my life forward, literally had this like epiphany-like moment out in the woods in like 2011, when I realised what woodworking could do for me, and since then my life has kind of gotten a lot more on track and I've got goals and I've got focus, so for me this, it-it sums up exactly who I've become and hopefully where my future will go, because it holds that point between the boyish fascination of going out in the woods and just smashing up logs for kindling. But also being a professional and learning how to use a tool well and that

translating into paying the rent. So it kind of, falls right on that point between the wild and the fun, the discipline and the structured, and without it, without that communion with the tool that none of that would exist. So, yeah, basically it defines who I am, also because it's just such a rare find, when other woodworkers see it, it grabs their attention so it makes me stand out within my woodworking community, I guess.

TB: And how do you think you'd feel me if it was lost or broken?

I25: Devastated, absolutely devastated. I mean, I could try to find another Elwell axe head quite easily and get it reground and get it polished up and sharpened up and then even make my own handle itself of buying one off someone else, but I-I-I don't know what I'd do with myself if I lost this, I genuinely don't know. I'd probably just not woodwork for a while and get over it *[laughs]*, go into a sulk. Yeah.

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so you said there were other objects as well that, that were important to you?

I25: Yeah, um, so I mean *[picking up objects in small wooden cup]* there are, there is this little bunch here, it's kind of like a little museum.

TB: Okay.

I25: So I mean, these are random things that I've accumulated. I mean, that's a deer tooth and a bullet that I found at the bottom of a waterfall in Scotland, my first time in the Highlands, and at the bottom of the waterfall with my girlfriend, so that was quite a nice moment. Whether they're linked, I'm not sure, they might be.

TB: Oh, okay.

I25: Um, but yeah, this is the shell from the - a shot that I fired. I've never fired a gun really, but I did, I hit the target with that so I was quite proud of that, thought that was quite cool. Um, this I found, um, it's - you know when you have an allergy, to certain medicines, you keep that in there so if you faint, people know not to put this inside your body. But this was found on [name], just off [name] in [area in city], and that's where my Mum, grew up in the 60s, so - and I lived there, about like 200 metres from the school she went to, I lived there for a few years in north [city]. SO the fact that this was found on the street where my Mum used to

hang out when she was a kid, that had some immediate sentimental value. This is my really, really chavvy *[both laugh]* bracelet that my auntie got me for my...17th birthday I think?

TB: Did you wear it a lot at the time?

I25: Loads. Until really recently, I used to *[laughs]*, I love it. It's-I think it's- no, is it real silver? Is it hallmarked? That's hallmarked isn't it?

TB: Yeah.

I25: Yeah okay. So it's legit. Um, this Clash badge I got in [area] when I was 13 years old. Um, the Clash were my favourite band growing up, they're still one of my favourites now, and it was when [that area] was still a little bit...weird? And there was still punks knocking around and it wasn't like, lots of oregano but like actually quite scary at times, like people getting mugged, and yeah I've had this Clash badge, it used to be on my bass strap and then it was on like a blazer I used to wear at school and I used to think I was a punk rocker, and yeah I've had this like 17 years now.

TB: Did you say 'lots of oregano'?

I25: Yeah, like *[both laugh]* it's got a bit nice in [that area] now, like you can buy -

TB: Oh, okay, like gentrification?

I25: Yeah, yeah, but yeah, it's not so much gentrified, it's just more really touristic now, and the stuff that's bought there is, I don't think a lot of it is from [area], or even from [city], or even if it was, the people, the people have changed somewhat and there used to be these punk rockers that would hang out on the bridge selling counterfeit videos of like punk gigs that they'd just filmed on a VHS recorder, or like counterfeit CDs and then these as well. So like, that early fascination with the Clash, because they used to like gig around there and hang around there loads, and it's where I got my first tattoo, I guess this just sort of sums up a time in my life when I was discovering new things. Also daring myself to listen to edgy music and go to places that were, like, fraught with danger in our eyes. *[Picking up another object]* That was on a keyring of my Dad's from like the 90s?

TB: Like, little Stonehenge type.

I25: Yeah, a little trilithon. And it - I broke it off the keyring for some reason. But it's become a little talisman that I keep with me. There's a little badge of Nessie -

TB: Oh, very nice *[laughs]*.

I25: Yeah I dunno where that came from, but I love it, such a, rubbish in joke. I don't know where that shell's from but I've had it for years. And these rings, I can't remember where they're from. 2 of them are from [area], that one is from Mali and is made of *[clicks tongue]* brass or copper? It's, no, brass is like orangey isn't it? I think it's maybe copper. But yeah just the fact that it's so crude and heavy, I used to wear a lot of jewellery -

TB: That is heavy, God!

I25: Yeah, really like, I like how imperfect it is.

TB: Yeah, it's really cool. And *[pointing]* this? It's a sort of stone?

I25: Yeah, so it's a flint that [my girlfriend] made. She's *[laughs]*, she's written '[name]'s scraper' which was at a dig in [country] last year, she was recording all the flint for, like, a database that she had accumulated and, yeah she was making her own little flints and she brought them back for me, so just, and *[holding up a bracelet]* again I don't know where this is from, I've had this for...so long, more-longer than I can remember, and I don't remember whose it is or how I got hold of it. But it's there. It's the fact that they're present is what's important. Again, I don't know where that's come from. So these are all things that are like, things that've sort of turned up in my life and they've just sort of been there.

TB: Just sort of trinkets?

I25: Yeah, and contained within the first sort of successful turning project I did? Um, I guess it's all linked because that *[points to axe]* - no, the axe started off the making of that *[points to cup holding trinkets]*. Um, and I've always loved wooden cups and wooden bowls and, to make the perfect circle, even though that isn't, it went off-centre so it's wider on one part and thinner on the other, but the fact that that's a successful little cup, meant it was appropriate to contain all the other little memories, all the other important things.

TB: Oh okay, so it's like, having like an appropriate vessel for it?

I25: Yeah and also I guess because I couldn't bring myself to put, like, coffee or whisky in there, because it's, uh, because of the way it's turned, it's like, turned along the grain so the log was like this *[gestures]* which means the flow of liquids goes along those cells that are going vertical so, if I put something in there, it would bleed out like this? *[picks up other cup]* Like, see how -

I'll show you on a better one, yeah, it all kind of flows through to the bottom, as if it's following those cells.

TB: So what about if it's going the other way?

I25: Then it, it's way more resistant, um, cuz the cells are going horizontally, and the-the liquid's going at 90 degrees to it, it blocks them, um, which that one is. But yeah purely because I didn't potentially wanna ruin this cuz I was so proud of my first successful project, without any tuition as well, I just thought something dry to put in it would be better, and therefore all my little tokens.

TB: So would you say overall, then, that you're the type of person who's attached to objects?

I25: Yeah, massively. [My girlfriend] always calls me a hoarder, um, and I don't know what it is about it, but yeah little, especially little cups and bowls but, yeah, little trinkets or tokens - maybe it's the archaeology creeping in? Cuz we found so many of those, and talk about them all the time in archaeology, um, maybe it's because of the, when I was...17 or 18? Our house got repossessed, and we got turfed out, cuz my Dad's business went bankrupt overnight in the financial crash? So we had, like a certain allotted time period to gather up our 18 years worth of memories, and take what we could, and we had to leave the rest. So I guess the small, weird little things I do have, from that time of innocence before all that happened, from my childhood when things were just a bit simpler, they do carry a lot of weight even though they are just these weird small badges that I can't remember how I acquired them or where they came from. They do have something in like the flow of memories, they do mark one little point when something meant something to me and I didn't have to explain it or justify why, it was just, I dunno yeah.

TB: Yeah, so when you, if you don't mind my asking, when you had to leave, was it mainly sentimental stuff that you took or, was it, were you very particular about the things that you took?

I25: Um, yeah, I think it was actually neither of those, it was purely down to practicality - what we could physically manage to take out and store, um, which is even more ruthless, because you can't really think out where those have come from, you just have to think what you can physically get out of the room or get out of the house. But then, in sort of putting a box away that's been sort of under my bed for years, that had been under my bed for years, then

opening it a few years later after the move, and finding those things and you're like oh, yeah, I remember that, y'know it's just, so I didn't actually intend on taking a lot of them, they kind of turned up incidentally and I think that's why they carried so much weight is because they've gone off the radar for so many years and then have now acquired a completely new meaning, um, because of circumstance, or because of changing circumstance. But yeah, I think there's loads more, I'm not gonna like, I'm not gonna go to town on all of them, but I mean there are so many more weird little trinkets that I have upstairs that like, I got from a market stall in [area] when I was 15, y'know that kind of thing. But yeah, I think that sums it up roughly.

Transcript: Interview 26

Date: 27/08/2019

Length of interview: 11 minutes 58 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I26: Interviewee 26

Transcript:

TB: If I asked you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does one come to mind?

I26: Yes - 2 come to mind!

TB: Okay. Do you want to tell me what those objects are?

I26: One is my watch, my Christopher Ward watch, it was given to me as a birthday present from [my wife] and it's just an absolutely lovely watch. It's what a watch should look like in my opinion and, um, I will never stop wearing that watch.

TB: Okay, okay. And how long have you had the watch?

I26: Oh, God, now you're asking. Um, probably about ten years?

TB: And what was the reason that she gave you the watch?

I26: My birthday. She asked for a birthday present and I wanted a watch.

TB: So why, why is that particular item - why does that have value for you?

I26: Because - two, two, two reasons. One, it was given to me by [my wife], and the-the second reason is, it's just an absolutely beautiful timepiece in my opinion. Simple as that.

TB: Okay. So how often would you say you wear it?

I26: Well at the moment I don't wear it a lot cuz I'm at home most of the time, but when I was at work full-time I would wear it every day of the week.

TB: And did you find that you looked at it a lot, or was it more of a habit of just having it on?

I26: No, I-I looked at it a lot, obviously to tell the time, and b) it was, it's more than just a watch, it's a piece of art. Uh, and it's a lovely piece of art.

TB: Okay. So have you - had the watch ever been broken, have you ever had to get it fixed or have you lost it at any point or anything like that?

I26: No. Um, I've had to replace the strap twice because it's a leather strap, a tan leather strap. I like< I like watches with a leather strap as opposed to, um, er, a metal strap. And, uh, this was - and because it's a gold face, um, a tan strap goes well with it, so I've only replaced the, the strap, um, a couple of times. And I've had this watch serviced once.

TB: And when you say serviced, what does that mean?

I26: I sent it back to the manufacturer to get it professionally serviced and cleaned, the internal mechanism.

TB: Oh, okay, so it lasts longer.

I26: Yes. Because I-because I valued it so much, I wanted to make sure it lasted a lifetime.

TB: And speaking of lasting a lifetime, what would you like to happen to the watch after you're gone?

I26: Oh, I hadn't even thought about that. Um...it's a male watch, so...what would be nice? Um...to be buried with me, to be created with me.

TB: And why is that?

I26: Because I'm attached to it!

TB: Okay. And do you find that when you have it on, do you find that you touch it a lot, or just wear it on your wrist?

I26: No, I do touch it, I touch the face a lot, cuz it's quite a prominent face insomuch that it sits proud on the wrist, so, I tend to actually do touch it quite a bit, it's very tactile.

TB: Okay. Um, so if you were to sum up the most important thing about this object, what-what would sum it up as?

I26: The most important thing? Um...probably it was given to me by [my wife], so it means a lot.

TB: And what is it about - I assume over the years, she's given you lot of gifts. What is it about this one in particular?

I26: I don't know! It's just - it's probably the one which has lasted the longest *[both laugh]*. That's probably why. And it's-it's-it's the one thing I actually asked for. Um, cuz [my wife] always, uh, struggles to get me presents, because I'm an awkward bugger to buy for, apparently - I disagree, of course. *[jokingly]* Just a little effort and thought wouldn't go amiss.

TB: *[laughs]* Um, so where is this object right now?

I26: This object is in the top drawer, in the set of drawers next to my bed.

TB: And do you usually keep it there?

I26: Uh, yes, it's either there or on top of the, uh, set of drawers next to my bed.

TB: Okay. And how would you feel if the watch was lost or broken?

I26: I'd be heartbroken. It's-it's one of two objects which I would, um, I would be really sad to lose.

TB: Okay. So, um, what was the other object you'd be sad to lose?

I26: The other object is the gold, um, ceramic vase I have in the lounge on top of the mantelpiece.

TB: Okay, and can you describe this for me?

I26: It's impossible to describe, I'd have to give you a picture. It's a unique piece of work, it's an original piece of art.

TB: So about how big is it?

I26: Probably about, oh I don't know, probably about...12 inches high? Probably a circumference of about 8 inches? It's got an interesting fossil design on the side. Um, it's gold on the outside and if you look on the inside it's all ceramic. Pottery, more pottery-like.

TB: So where did you get it from?

I26: [My wife], um, um, from an art shop in [town] which is no longer there.

TB: And how long ago did you get it?

I26: Sorry?

TB: How long ago did you get it?

I26: Probably about...16, 17 years ago, probably. Even longer, probably, about 18 or 19 years ago.

TB: And why did you get it in particular?

I26: Because I liked it!

TB: And that was it?

I26: Because I liked it, and because it was an original piece of art. And the reason why it's important to me, is because it is the first piece of original art I ever bought. I like art, but I prefer it if it's original, it doesn't matter if it's an amateur or a professional as long as it's an original, I'm not too, I'm not too keen on limited editions and that.

TB: So do you - I mean, it's in your lounge, so I assume you see it every day? But you don't really touch it much?

I26: No I don't! It's too precious, I'm worried I'll drop it. But I did pick it up the other day to examine it.

TB: Examine it just to look at it, or examine it to check if it needed dusting, or...?

I26: No, no, no, just to look at it. There's a, there's a common theme between these two pieces of, um, these two objects: they're both gold in colour.

TB: Oh, okay!

I26: I don't know whether the cold is a factor in my liking them, but they're both gold objects, in effect.

TB: So would you consider yourself overall the type of person who's attached to objects?

I26: Um, no, not really. Um, let me think about that, hold on...no, I wouldn't say so. There's a few things, like the watch and the vase, which I would hate if I lost it, um...attached to objects? You mean inanimate objects?

TB: Yes, yeah.

I26: Oh, dear, because if it were animate, or human, yeah, [my wife] *[both laugh]*. No, I like things, but I wouldn't say I get overly attached to things.

TB: Mmm, did you say you have a couple of specific items?

I26: Well, the watch and the, the vase are the ones that I like a lot. And as I said to you, I think it was more original things, and - I've also got an original typewriter made in 1939, a brand of typewriter made in 1939, which I like as well. Um, but no, I-I like, um, when it comes to, to things, I like stuff that was made years and years ago, because they were made with a bit of class and they, they look and they last longer, unlike um the stuff that is factory-made nowadays. I-I, it's like things from the past, I think have got a bit of elegance and style about them, that you don't get in today's world.

Transcript: Interview 27

Date: 27/08/2019

Length of interview: 3 minutes 43 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I27: Interviewee 27

Transcript:

TB: If I asked you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does one come to mind?

I27: Yes.

TB: Okay, could you tell me about it, or describe it for me?

I27: *[holds up hand]* A ring that Mum and Dad gave me.

TB: Okay. Um, so what does it look like?

I27: It's a gold ring with a blue topaz, I guess it's an oval cut in the middle, it's surrounded by small diamonds.

TB: Okay, and how long have you had it for?

I27: Um...7 years.

TB: And why did you get this object?

I27: Uh, it was my birthday and I asked for it.

TB: *[laughs]* And where was the ring from originally?

I27: Dad had bought it for Mum for her...21st, or her 24th birthday? One of the two.

TB: And why does this object have value for you?

I27: I don't know, I wear it every day, it's become part of my, dunno, being.

TB: And so that's why it's important to you, because you wear it so frequently?

I27: Well, yeah, Mum and Dad got it for me, so it means a lot coming from them, I guess.

TB: How does it feel when you wear it? Like, does it feel-

I27: I sometimes feel a bit incomplete if I'm not wearing it, like I'm missing something, like I- I've missed part of a routine.

TB: So you obviously notice it when it's not there, but do you notice when it's there?

I27: Not until I, unless it's really hot and I can feel it cuz it's sweaty, I-I don't really remember it being there unless I'm like fiddling with it. But no, it's not a constant like, the ring's there, presence, kind of thing.

TB: Um, so do you find that you touch this ring at certain times, or is it a passive thing, always on your hand?

I27: Yeah. I touch it like this *[gestures, fiddling with the ring]* if I'm chatting.

TB: So you just fiddle with it a bit?

I27: Yeah.

TB: Um, do you wear it every day then?

I27: 99% of the time, yeah.

TB: And how would you feel if this object was lost or broken?

I27: Upset, I guess. Depends - if I lost it, I'd be more annoyed, if someone else lost it then I'd be angry. If it was broken, I'd be a bit - I'd be quite upset, but it's only material goods at the end of the day, I can, I can, just keep it and change it instead, make it into a necklace or something.

TB: When I asked you to think of an object, did any others come to mind?

I27: Err...no, not particularly.

TB: So would you say that you're the type of person who's attached to objects, or not?

I27: It depends, because I'm quite ruthless when I'm cleaning, I'll just throw things out, quite ruthlessly, like, in my room, I will just randomly throw away, like, half my clothes. But no, I'd say I hold onto certain things, but not tons of stuff by any means.

Transcript: Interview 28

Date: 27/08/2019

Length of interview: 9 minutes 31 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I28: Interviewee 28

Transcript:

TB: If I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you.

I28: Okay.

TB: Does one come to mind?

I28: Yes, I have it with me actually.

TB: Okay, cool, could you show me what it is? *[I28 shows a cat-shaped ornament]* Oh! So it's a little, like cat...is it an ornament, I guess?

I28: You have, it's, uh, you have to put it on top of, uh, on top of, um, furniture or something. And it looks like this *[I28 puts ornament on book and holds it up - cat looks like it's peering over the book]*.

TB: So it's made out of wood?

I28: Yes *[taps ornament]*.

TB: And it's brown, and quite small.

I28: Yeah, one of its ears is broken as well, cuz it fell.

TB: Oh, fell off the - whatever you were putting it on?

I28: Otherwise it's in good shape. I've had it for...8 years now?

TB: Okay. And how - was it a gift? Or did you buy it?

I28: Yes, my sister bought it for me, uh, when she was 8 years younger - when she was 8. Um, the- well she gave it to me 2 or 3 years before I went to university, uh, and I've had it ever since!

TB: And did you take it to university with you?

I28: I did, yes, yes. All 3 years, yeah.

TB: And why does this object have value for you, or why is it important for you?

I28: Um...it just, um, I know my sister cares, but it's just - she was 8, she didn't have to spend any money on it, um, she didn't have to give me a gift or anything but she, she just wanted to give me this to remind me of home, because I, I have a cat as well, and uh, it meant a lot to me because - I don't know how to explain it, but...yeah! *[both laugh]*

TB: Okay, so how does the object feel when you hold it in your hands?

I28: Well the thing is, I never really hold it, because it stays on top of the, um, bookshelf, um - I've held it for the first time in 2 years and a half. It feels a bit strange because I just look at it, uh, it's not really something you hold, I guess, it's more of a decoration. Um, but it makes me smile every time I look at it, makes me think of my family.

TB: So how did your sister give it to you? Did she just hand it to you and say 'here's a gift for you', or was it a bit more formal?

I28: It was very formal, she just gave it to me as I was packing up, she just wanted me to have it before I left, um, yeah. I don't think there was any preparation for it, I think she just wanted to give me something to remind me of home and that's what she chose, and I think it's a really good choice.

TB: How often would you say that you use, or look at this object?

I28: Every time I sit down on the sofa, which is at least once a day. At least once a day.

TB: What would you say is the most important thing about this object?

I28: The most important thing about this object is that it was given to me by my sister, I think.

TB: So it represents your relationship with her?

I28: Uh...in a way I guess, yes. It's, you know, cats are something we both like, um, and it just feels like I've got someone looking over me as well. Because that's supposed to be high up.

TB: Um, so how would you feel - I guess you already said that it got a little broken on one ear when it fell, um, how would you feel when it was lost or broken, or how did you feel when it was lost or broken?

I28: Well, when it was broken it was a bit sad, but then I realised it's still the same object - it's still here. What it represents isn't lost, um. If it were lost though, I would feel crushed. I would feel very sad. Um, cuz you can't really ask for that kind of gift, um, it's-it's something you get, um, yes, if I were to lose it then, um, I'd just be really sad.

TB: Um, so when I asked you to think of an object, did any others come to mind?

I28: No - well, yes, one did actually. I've got it here, do you want me to show you?

TB: Yes, of course!

I28: It's a little box, my Mum gave it to me when I was young, uh, too young to, um, remember, um, that box belonged to my grandmother, the one I never met. I don't know much about her, I know she had good taste *[both laugh]*. I like to have it because she died when I was young, or before I was born, I'm not sure, um, and it's kind of the only thing I have that connects me to her.

TB: And how would you feel if that one were lost or broken?

I28: I don't...well, the same. Um, I-I wouldn't feel as sad as if the wooden cat was lost, because again I've never met my grandmother, um, I think it would hurt my mother more, she's the

one who gave it to me and she really struggled when she died, um, and because she's - my grandmother is [nationality] and in [country] they, they don't really keep things the way we do. There's, there's no paper records, or there's not a lot of pictures, and um - so this is one of the few things we have left of her. Even in my grandad's house, because they were divorced at the time, so he has nothing of her, and then she was ill and died, so yeah this is one of the few things left. She would kill me *[both laugh]* if I lost it.

TB: Do you consider yourself the kind of person who is attached to objects?

I28: Well, apart from those 2, not at all, no. I mean, I've got expensive things I don't want to lose *[laughs]*, but it's not really sentimental, it's more of a necessity sometimes. Um, yeah...even when I look around now, there's not really much that really, yeah. Not as much as these 2 I think.

Transcript: Interview 29

Date: 28/08/2019

Length of interview: 8 minutes 7 seconds

TB: Taryn Bell

I29: Interviewee 29

Transcript:

TB: So, if I ask you to think of an object which has a lot of value for you, or which means a lot to you, does anything come to mind?

I29: Yes.

TB: Okay, um, can you describe the object in mind for me?

I29: Um...I'm just going to talk about my teddy bear again *[laughs]*, cuz it's, um, it's definitely the thing I've owned for the longest, I've had it since I was 3 months old, and it just travels with me, like, every time I move house, so it's my little security. I cuddle it when I need.

TB: And does your teddy have a name?

I29: Yes, he is called [name] and you can blame my parents for that!

TB: Oh my good-you're going to have to tell me how to spell that! *[both laugh]* Where does the name come from?

I29: Um, that was the shop he was bought in, because we lived in [country] when I was a child.

TB: Okay.

I29: So when I was growing up he was known as Garmy, but these days he's usually referred to as Little Bear, cuz that's simpler for other people to deal with.

TB: So how long have you have Little Bear?

I29: Um, so I was 3 months old, so...nearly 29 years!

TB: Oh my goodness!

I29: I know! He's old, and very battered.

TB: So could you describe the sort of shape, uh, the weight, the material...?

I29: He's quite small, his head is about half his body mass, um, little fluffy ears, little red bow tie, um, he used to have a ribbon round his neck that had my name written on it, so if I took him out of the house he might find his way back again. Um, he has lost most of his fur off his body, cuz of cuddling him too much, particularly round the middle bit, it's still quite furry, um, and he has 2 very lopsided black eyes and a little brown button nose, and they always get, um, bashed up, every time it's in the washing machine so you have to polish them back up or he looks a bit unconscious for a while.

TB: So how often does he get put in the washing machine?

I29: About once a year?

TB: Oh really? *[both laugh]* That's quite good actually!

I29: I know, right? I think he got put in the washing machine before he was allowed in the house when I moved in with [my partner].

TB: Oh, okay. Um, so why does Little Teddy have, have value for you?

I29: Um, I think partly it's a kind of long association thing. So it's very much, this sort of - unconscious feeling that if he's there then I'm somewhere at home, and I'm relaxed, and I'm chilled out, and, um, I guess partly it's also a very sensory thing, cuz you know, there's a very particular feeling and a very particular smell to him and stuff and you-you just know that

there's no other thing in the world that would be the same, quite. So if I lost him that would be completely irreplaceable, basically, so yeah.

TB: So how often would you say you, you - I mean, where is he at the moment?

I29: He's sitting on a box beside my bed.

TB: And how often would you say you touch him, or move him, or engage with him?

I29: Um, probably, most days? Most days? Like, um, if I'm sleeping on my own, then he'll usually come into bed with me, for a cuddle, cuz I'm a grown-up *[both laugh]*. Um, and, um, quite often, like, if I come home and I've had a bit of a rough day, like, I'll just camp on the sofa and be like and I'm going to bring the bear up, just completely chill out. It's been important for me when I've been ill, before, to just go, I'm not alone, there's something there that, where you can look at it and it just makes you feel better, basically, in a very kind of childish sort of way, like when your parents say it's okay, I'm just going to give you a pat on the head and you'll feel better. Just like a cuddle from a bear and it'll make everything better.

TB: So has he had to - I mean, you've said he gets quite worn, um, have you had to repair him at any points?

I29: Um, I've sent him into my mother for surgery usually, cuz she's a doctor so she does the full surgical procedure with the hole cut out, which she did when I was little, a little cloth cut in the cloth to mend up the tear. Um, yeah, it's had a couple of tears, it's...I think he used to have a mouth which came off when he was very little, possibly like a label that used to be attached to him. Yeah, so he's missing the odd little piece, but...

TB: And you said that if you lost or broke it - how would you feel?

I29: Um...I mean, I'm an adult, so it wouldn't ruin my life! But I would be really, really sad for a while, particularly, I think there would be points later on where I'd kind of go, oh, you know what would really make me feel better? It would just be, you know, having that thing there, the real physical comfort side of things, and not being able to get to it, cuz sometimes I have that on, on holidays when I haven't taken anything with me, and you're like, you know, you're jetlagged or you're tired or you've got food poisoning or something and you're like *[sighs]*, I just want, I want to be home, basically, but in lieu of that what I want is something there that's

going to make me feel like I'm home and everything's okay. So yeah, I would be very upset, um, yeah.

TB: So if you could sum up how Little Teddy makes you feel, I guess?

I29: Um, I think very calm, and very secure. Um, and there's definitely an association with sleep there, so quite sleepy *[both laugh]*. Um, yeah, relaxed, I think, yeah.

TB: And when I asked you at the start, when I asked you to think about an object, were there any others which came to mind, or was it very much Little Teddy?

I29: Um, there's a few, like there's pieces of jewellery that I've been gifted from people, or, um, the odd book that I really get attached to, but I feel like, um, I don't tend to own objects that have a lot of value to them, because I move around a lot, and I'm quite clumsy, so I don't hang on to a lot of items, much. Um, and books, you can get another one, you can get the same experience somewhere else. So, that's definitely the one thing that is the physical embodiment of what I, want, like, there's no other version of that.

TB: I thought it was quite interesting how you, um, how you talked about how moving around a lot, has meant that you don't really hang onto stuff much. So, why do you think - do you think it's just the hassle of moving a lot, and not wanting to have all those things to...

I29: Um, yeah, partly. I'm not saying I don't have stuff, like, I've got a reasonable amount of clothes and shoes and just, pots and pans and functional stuff, but like, because if I didn't have those I'd have to buy another one and I don't want to spend lots of money, but, um, yeah, I mean on average I've moved every year and a half for the last ten years so...having too many things, either they get lost on the move or they get broken, or, you know, they disappear for a year and they turn up in a box somewhere, so I don't, like, I don't have things that I can't just like...put in a shoebox and move around, basically. Yeah.

TB: So would you say overall, um, would you - do you think of yourself as the kind of person who is attached to objects, or not?

I29: Yeah, yeah, I think so. Like, I invest quite a lot of, kind of emotional things in objects, even when they're not objects that are kind of precious to me. There's the, like, you know, the seashell that I picked up on a holiday and I can look at it and go, yeah I remember that, or stuff that's been given as gifts and things, like that, um, and my sister's the opposite, like she's

really minimalist. I used to adopt her soft toys when we were little cuz she would just like, leave them in the corner like, oh I'm not interested in them anymore, and I'd be like, no, they're sad, someone needs to play with them! *[both laugh]*

TB: And is she still quite minimalist today?

I29: Yeah, yeah, it's amazing. Like our childhood rooms, mine's - cuz the house got repainted and they had to pack everything up so mine's full of boxes, and hers is basically empty furniture, like a bookcase with like 3 books on it, and a bed, and that's it.

Study 3

This study was carried out online using Qualtrics (for further details, see Chapter 5).

Transcript of information sheet and consent form

Thankyou for taking part in this survey! Please review the information below and, if you would like to proceed, provide your consent.

Aim of this study

The aim of this study is to better understand whether there is a link between the types of relationships in people's lives (with loved ones, pets, religion, places, etc.) and the type of relationship they have with objects which are particularly important to them.

Who can participate

To participate, you must be at least 18 years old.

What to expect

This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary.

There are 3 sections, one giving basic background information (this cannot be used to identify you), one asking about important objects in your life, and a final section asking about the people or things you might turn to for comfort, as well as a short survey about the nature of close relationships in your life. You can give as much or as little detail as you like. **Even if you don't have any particularly significant objects in your life, I still want to hear from you!**

At the end of the survey, you will also be given the opportunity to enter a **prize draw to win one of two Love2shop vouchers for £25** (or international equivalent, if you are not in the UK).

What will happen to your data

The survey questions will not collect any data that could be used to identify you. If you mention names or information that might make it possible to identify you, these will be anonymised prior to analysis. The information contained within this survey will be securely stored in a secure Google Drive folder accessible only to the researcher, and the data from this survey will eventually be published in an anonymous form as part of both a thesis and future publications, the former of which will be freely available on the White Rose Open Access website.

If you would like to enter into the prize draw, your email address will be kept securely in case I need to contact you. This will be stored separately from your survey responses, and this data will be deleted once the prize draw has been completed.

How to remove your data

If you would like your data removed from the study, please email Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk). The last date upon which you can do this is 30th September 2020. You will create a code at the end of the survey, unique to you, which can be used to remove your data at a later date, should you wish. You can read more about your data rights here: <https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/your-info/generalprivacynotice/>.

Ethics disclaimer

This study has been approved by the University of York's Arts and Humanities Ethics Board. If you have any questions or issues before, during or after the survey, email Taryn Bell (tlb505@york.ac.uk). Alternatively if you have any questions or issues regarding the ethics of this study, please email the Chair of the Arts and Humanities Ethics Board at the University of York, Dr Keith Allen (keith.allen@york.ac.uk).

Before beginning the survey, please make sure that you have read the ethics and GDPR statements above.

Please read the below statements. You must tick each box in order to proceed.

- ☐ I am aged 18 or over. (1)
- ☐ I have read and understood the information above. (2)
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before 30th September without giving any reason. (3)
- ☐ I consent to this data being analysed and included in both a PhD dissertation and future publications in an anonymised form. (4)

Survey questions

Block 1

In this section, you'll be asked a few basic questions about yourself. Where there are text boxes, feel free to add more information if appropriate, but only if you're comfortable doing so.

Q1.1 What is your age?

- ☐ 18-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-34 (2)
- ☐ 35-44 (3)
- ☐ 45-54 (4)
- ☐ 55-64 (5)
- ☐ 65+ (6)

Q1.2 With which gender identity do you most identify?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Non-binary (3)
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (4) _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say (5)

Q1.3 What is your current relationship status?

- ☐ Single (1)

- In a relationship (2)
- Married (3)
- Separated (4)
- Divorced (5)
- Widowed (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q1.4 What is your current household status? Please tick all that apply.

- Living with partner (1)
- Living with parents (2)
- Living with siblings (3)
- Living with other family (e.g. children) (4)

- Living with friends/housemates (5)
- Living alone (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q1.5 Do you have any pets? If so, what type/s of pets, and how many?

- Yes (1) _____
- No (2)

Q1.6 Do you hold religious or spiritual beliefs? If so, please give details of your religion or belief system, but only if you're comfortable doing so.

- Yes (1) _____
- No (2)

Block 2

In this section, I would like you to think about whether there is an object (or objects) in your life which is particularly important to you.

If you have more than one object, pick one, and you can submit more later on, if you would like to.

Q2.1 Do you have an object which is particularly important to you? (By object, we mean something non-living - please don't include a pet or another person as your answer).

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If In this section, I would like you to think about whether there is an object (or objects) in your... = No

Q2.2 What is the object?

Q2.3 Why is this object important to you? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ It's a gift (1)
- ☐ It's an heirloom (2)
- ☐ It's useful (3)
- ☐ It comforts me (4)
- ☐ It represents me/who I am/my identity (5)
- ☐ It reminds me of an accomplishment (6)
- ☐ It reminds me of another person (7)
- ☐ It reminds me of an event (8)
- ☐ It has aesthetic value (i.e. I like how it looks) (9)
- ☐ It has sensory value (i.e. I like how it feels/tastes/smells) (10)
- ☐ It has monetary value (11)
- ☐ It has religious/spiritual value (12)
- ☐ It has an important story behind it (13)
- ☐ Other (14) _____

Q2.4 Do you feel an emotional connection to this object?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q2.5 Is there a particular story associated with this object that you would like to tell?

Q2.6 Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally (for example, when you happen to see it) or you might actively seek this object out when you need comforting.

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally (for example, when you hap... = Yes

Q2.7 Please give more detail about why this object comforts you.

Display This Question:

If Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally (for example, when you hap... = Yes

Q2.8 How do you gain comfort from this object? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ I look at it (1)
- ☐ I touch it (2)

- I use it (3)
- I think about it (4)
- Other (please give more detail) (5)

Q2.9 Have you used, touched or thought about this object more or less often than usual during the COVID-19 lockdown? If there is any difference in the amount, please give more details.

- Yes (1) _____
- About the same amount as usual (2)
- No (3) _____

Q2.10 If you would like to include any other information about your object, please do so here.

Q2.11 Do you have another object that you would like to talk about?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If Do you have another object that you would like to talk about? = No

Q2.12 What is the object?

Q2.13 Why is this object important to you? Please tick all that apply.

- It's a gift (1)
- It's an heirloom (2)
- It's useful (3)

- It comforts me (4)
- It represents me/who I am/my identity (5)
- It reminds me of an accomplishment (6)
- It reminds me of another person (7)
- It reminds me of an event (8)
- It has aesthetic value (i.e. I like how it looks) (9)
- It has sensory value (i.e. I like how it feels/tastes/smells) (10)
- It has monetary value (11)
- It has religious/spiritual value (12)
- It has an important story behind it (13)
- Other (14) _____

Q2.14 Do you feel an emotional connection to this object?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q2.15 Is there a particular story associated with this object that you would like to tell?

Q2.16 Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally, or it could provide you with comfort every day.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally, or it could provide you w... = Yes

Q2.17 Please give more detail about why this object comforts you.

Display This Question:

If Does this object comfort you in any way? This may only be occasionally, or it could provide you w... = Yes

Q2.18 How do you gain comfort from this object? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ I look at it (1)
- ☐ I touch it (2)
- ☐ I use it (3)
- ☐ I think about it (4)
- ☐ Other (please give more detail) (5)

Q2.19 Have you used, touched or thought about this object more or less often than usual during the COVID-19 lockdown? If there is any difference in the amount, please give more details.

- ☐ Yes (1) _____
- ☐ About the same amount as usual (2) _____
- ☐ No (3) _____

Q2.20 If you would like to include any other information about your object, or details of more objects, please do so here.

Block 3

In this final section, you will be asked a series of questions about important relationships in your life, and who you might turn to for comfort.

Q3.1 If you were having a bad day, which of the following would you turn to for comfort?

Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Partner/spouse (1)
- ☐ Other family (2)
- ☐ Friends (3)
- ☐ Pet/s (4)
- ☐ An object (5)
- ☐ A place (6)
- ☐ Religion/faith/beliefs (7)
- ☐ Hobbies (e.g. music, TV, reading) (8)
- ☐ Exercise (9)
- ☐ Other (please give more detail) (10) _____

Q3.2 Do you ever turn to a specific object or objects as a source of comfort? If yes, and you haven't already mentioned it in this survey, please note what the object is.

- ☐ Yes (1) _____
- ☐ No (2)

Q3.3 When you were a child, how close was your relationship with the main person who brought you up?

- ☐ Very close (1)
- ☐ Close (2)
- ☐ Okay (3)
- ☐ Not close (4)

Finally, please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about *close relationships in general*.

Q3.4 It helps to turn to people in times of need.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)

- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.5 I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.6 I talk things over with people.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.7 I find it easy to depend on others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)

- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.8 I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.9 I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.10 I often worry that other people do not really care for me.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Somewhat disagree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat agree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Strongly agree (7)

Q3.11 I'm afraid that other people may abandon me.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Strongly agree (7)

Q3.12 I worry that others won't care about me as much as I care about them.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Strongly agree (7)

Thank you for completing this survey!

If you would like to enter the prize draw, please type your email here.

Please use the prompts below to create an anonymous code by which your response can be identified by you, should you wish to remove your responses. Please keep a record of this code.

- ☐ First initial of your mother's maiden name (1)

- ☐ First initial of your first name (2) _____

- The day of the month on which you were born (3)

Raw data

At the link below, there are 440 responses. The data in this spreadsheet has been anonymised and the degree of attachment anxiety and avoidance has been calculated, but otherwise the data is unprocessed.

[Raw data: responses to questionnaire](#) can be found on Google Drive, and the full spreadsheet is also attached to this thesis.

Appendix 2: Alaska Native figurines

In the two months that I spent at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, I was able to spend a total of three weeks in their Collections department over two months (I was meant to spend more time there, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to leave the US early). During this time, I looked at 49 separate 'lots' from the collection, consisting of 62 separate items. These consisted mainly of human representations (n = 51), but there were also a handful of animal representations (n = 5) as well as a handful of objects in other shapes (n = 6, mainly charms in abstract shapes). The human representations all showed great amounts of variability: some were full-bodied, others consisted of only a head and torso, while others were missing certain limbs. All dolls were made of either ivory, wood or bone, and some dolls were multi-material, including animal gut, sinew, string, cotton, wool, glass beads, metal, and other materials. The objects were in varying states of preservation, with some completely undamaged while others were very damaged.

It is incredibly difficult to tell the functions of objects from one another, because human representations in particular can have a multitude of potential meanings. Polish does not help to discern function either, because often the polish hotspots are simply the places that stick out the most, which does not indicate how they were held or attached. Often points of attachment show no polish at all.

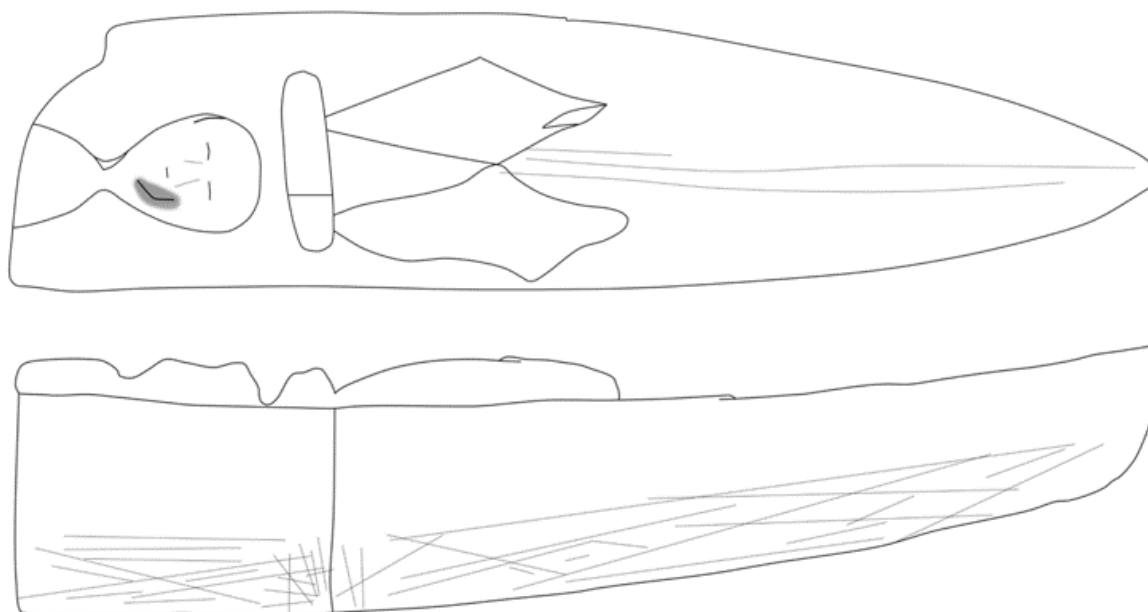
After consultation with the Collections and Research teams at the NMAI, I have chosen to show my sketches of these objects, rather than photos, out of respect for the Thule, Iñupiat and Yup'ik nations. Photos of some of these objects (which have been taken and shared with the permission of the nations from whom the objects came) can be found on the NMAI's Collections website.

This appendix consists of my drawings and notes made while at the NMAI.

Thule Tradition

Bering Strait

Catalogue no: 208927.000



Object type: Personal items

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 16.2cm x 3.6cm x 4cm, weight 257.8g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of Judge Nathan Bijur (1862-1930); inherited by his widow Lilly Prochownick Bijur (1867-1944) and son Harry Ash Bijur (1887-1972); purchased by MAI from Harry Bijur and his wife Madeline Bijur (1901-1982) in 1946." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Ivory hunting charm shaped like a canoe. Badly damaged on the top and on one side; the bottom and the other side are heavily scratched. On the top of the canoe is a small bas-relief carving of the head and shoulders of a person, and above them is a thick line, from which 'hang' two bas-relief seals.

Notes: Polish hotspots are essentially wherever there is no damage.

Little Diomed Island

Catalogue no. 050949.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling

Object ID: Female doll

Material: Wood, hide

Dimensions: height 12.17cm, width 6.35cm, depth 2.09cm, weight 64g.

Provenance: Found in grave during excavations.

"Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1916."
[From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Clothed female doll. The head is round, with

hair attached (unclear what material used to make the hair, but it was glued down with a black substance). The face is carved, with the eyes, nose and mouth clear. The mouth is downturned. The body is covered from the neck to the feet in clothing, which has become damaged and so has a number of holes. The doll wears a tunic-style garment which reaches almost to the feet. The arms are flat pieces of hide, the right arm pointing 'up'. The doll also has boots which have been delicately sewn together. The doll's head and upper torso consist of a single piece of wood, to which the legs have been attached. The tunic appears to be made of 2 main pieces of fabric, at the top of which have been sewn a number of other little pieces of fabric, which could represent tools.

Notes: Funerary object inferred. No polish visible - the back of the head is shiny but this may be from the glue used to stick the hair on.

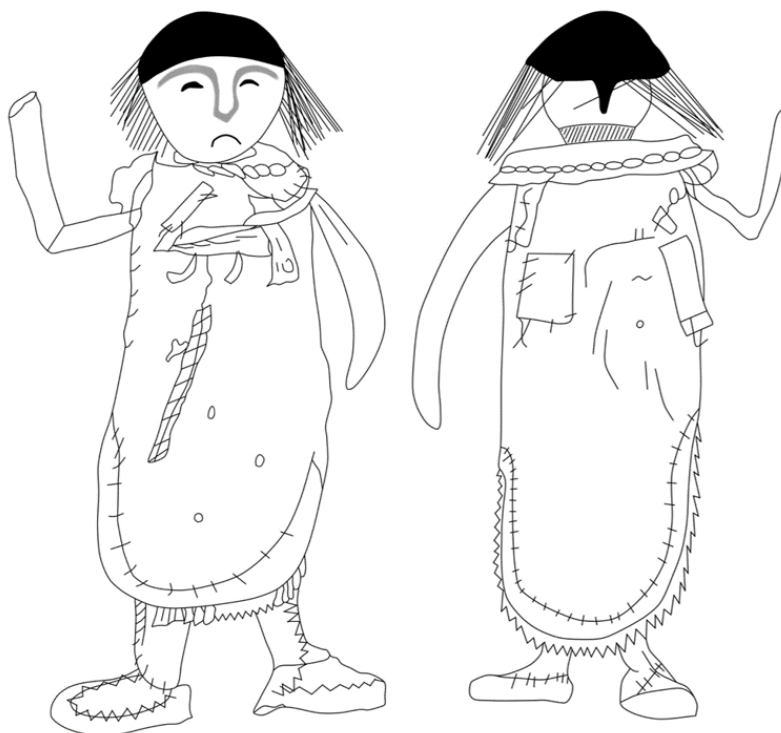
Point Barrow

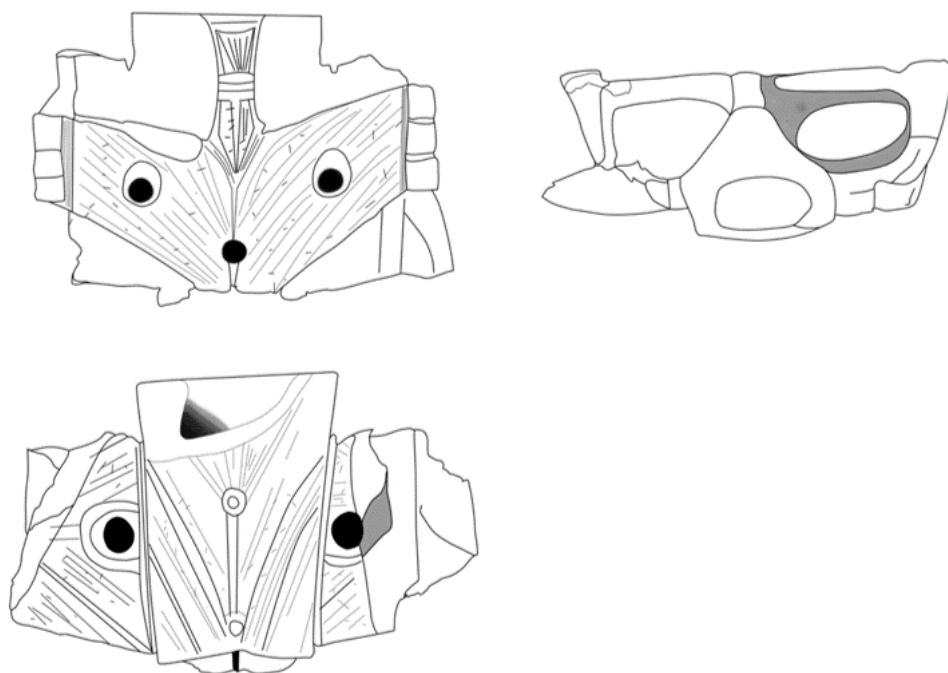
Catalogue no. 155962.000

Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory





Dimensions: height 4.9cm, width 7cm, depth 3.1cm, weight 64.2g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1927." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Hunting charm with incised decoration (Okvik style?). Fairly damaged. Unusual shape, unclear what it's meant to be. Covered all over in long, incised diagonal and horizontal lines, with 3 symmetrical holes on the front. On the back, two holes on either side, and two incised circles down the middle.

Polish hotspots:

- The whole charm is polished on the outer sides - all the flat, undamaged surfaces are polished.
- Rounded edge at top (see drawing) - polished. Could this be from having been hung?

Quinhagak River

Catalogue no. 152006.000

Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

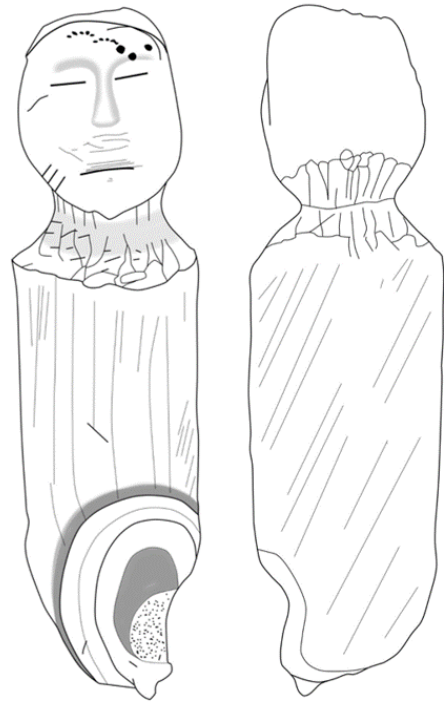
Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 5.45cm, head width 1.22cm, neck width 0.93cm, body width 1.49 cm, max depth 1.4cm, weight 40g.

Provenance: "Collected or excavated by Harold W. Averill (1885-ca. 1935, a dentist and amateur archaeologist who lived in Bethel, Alaska, in the mid-1920s); purchased by MAI from Harold W. Averill in 1927." [From NMAI Collections report]. Accession Lot Form is very vague - e.g. 'Acquisition Method: Purchase (presumably)'.

Description: Small ivory doll, made from a whale's tooth. Two shallow horizontal incisions for eyes and another for the mouth. All appear darkened in the incision, but it's unclear whether this was purposeful or taphonomic. A very small nose has been carved, but this is fairly simple, with no nostrils. There are 6 dots spaced horizontally across the left cheek, and 3 more dots along the left brow. The ivory narrows at the neck, then broadens out to the torso which is slightly wider than the head. The torso is straight and there are no other features visible. The bottom of the figure is at an irregular slant, showing the brown and white cross section of the ivory - the slanted surface is highly polished and it is perhaps likely that the ivory was found like this, rather than being broken off. Surface of the torso is pockmarked.



Notes: Overall, this figure is smooth, but not polished, apart from the slanted surface at the bottom, which is highly polished, but this is the result of the raw material, not because of wear. No polish inside the attachment. The engraving pulls away from the face - if something were to hang it would hang behind the neck, so maybe hair or a headdress? Could be made from the root canal?

Catalogue no. 152007.000

Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

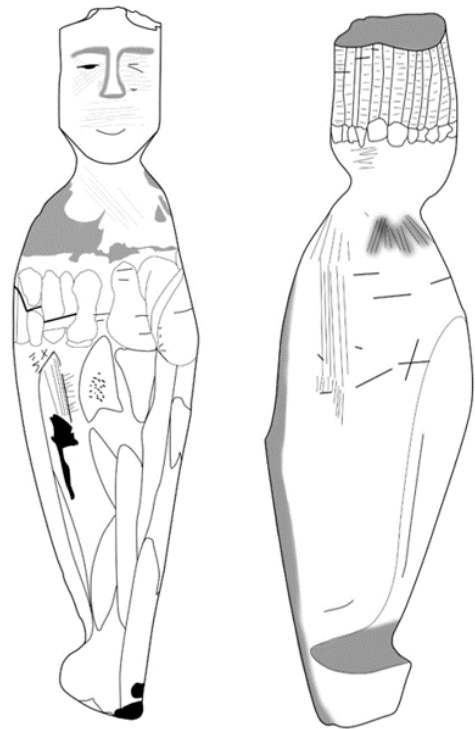
Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 5.55cm, head width 0.76cm, width 1.37cm, depth 1.5cm, weight 28.5g.

Provenance: "Collected or excavated by Harold W. Averill (1885-ca. 1935, a dentist and amateur archaeologist who lived in Bethel, Alaska, in the mid 1920s); purchased by MAI from Harold W. Averill in 1927." [From NMAI Collections report]. Accession Lot Form is very vague - e.g. 'Acquisition Method: Purchase (presumably)'.

Description: Ivory doll. Represents a human, but if it weren't for the facial features, this could almost be mistaken for a seal, such is the shape. The head is small and oblong-shaped, with shallow carved eyes and mouth (mouth is upturned). At the bottom of the head, the figure is carved inwards for a neck, and then the width of the figure extends out towards the middle of the 'torso' then narrows below this, coming to a rounded point at the bottom. No arms or legs are visible, but the feet are suggested by a small asymmetrical bump at the bottom, which points to the figure's right hand side (similar to 024321.000). Along the figure's left hand side, there is a large groove, which probably reflects a layer of the ivory which has flaked off.



This figure looks like it was either carved in a hurry, or was simply not finished to the same degree as some of the other figurines, as the surface is not as smooth, and the carving marks can be clearly seen all over the figurine. Perhaps as a result, the surface is quite dirty, with a number of nicks and tiny pockmarks which have become ingrained with dirt.

The top and bottom of the head are also quite irregularly shaped - because of the dirt it's difficult to see whether they are broken or whether this is what the material was like originally.

Polish hotspots:

- Like 152006.000, it's difficult to tell
- There are a lot of manufacturing marks and the surface as a result does not show much polish

- There are some areas, e.g. the face, which are smooth but aren't showing much in the way of polish.

Catalogue no. 152008.000

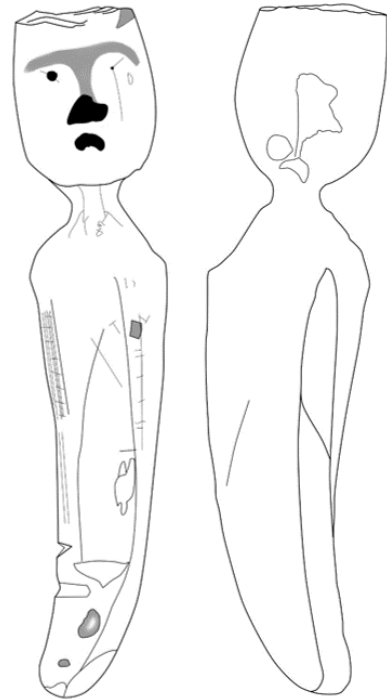
Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 6.52cm, head width 1.09cm, body width 1.22cm, greatest depth 1.06cm, weight 25.5g.

Provenance: "Collected or excavated by Harold W. Averill (1885-ca. 1935, a dentist and amateur archaeologist who lived in Bethel, Alaska, in the mid-1920s); purchased by MAI from Harold W. Averill in 1927." [From NMAI Collections report]. Accession Lot Form is very vague - e.g. 'Acquisition Method: Purchase (presumably)'.



Description: Small brown ivory doll. Carved from what appears to be an animal's tooth/tusk, as it is asymmetrical, curving to the figure's right hand side, shaped like a canine tooth or a tiny tusk. The head is comparatively large, with a flattened top which has a shallow dent right in the middle. This may be due to damage, but the dent itself looks very old. Was the material like this when it was made? The back of the head is slightly flattened: was it resting against something or is this just the material itself?

Facial features are carved, but are quite worn down - the nose, for example, looks worn down, or perhaps damaged. The eyes have been carved out: you can see two tiny points in the centre of each where the initial carving may have begun, and there are tiny cracks emanating from the left one - is this a result of wear and tear or cracks from the initial percussion? On the right eye you can see from the material where material was taken away to make the eye. The mouth is very small and downturned. A thin neck is carved, which gradually slopes to become the torso. The torso itself is in the shape of a canine/tusk, and gradually slopes to one side. The torso is flattened at the front, back and sides, which is presumably intentional, giving the torso an oblong-like cross-section. On the figure's left hand side, there is a small notch missing

- damage? There are small patches of damage, particularly on the face, but as a whole this is preserved remarkably well.

Polish hotspots:

- On the back of the head, there are a few spots
- At the point on the very bottom
- Cheeks (smooth but not super polished).

Similar to 152006 and 152007, there is a lot of smoothness but very little obvious polish.

St Lawrence Island

Catalogue no. 133495.000

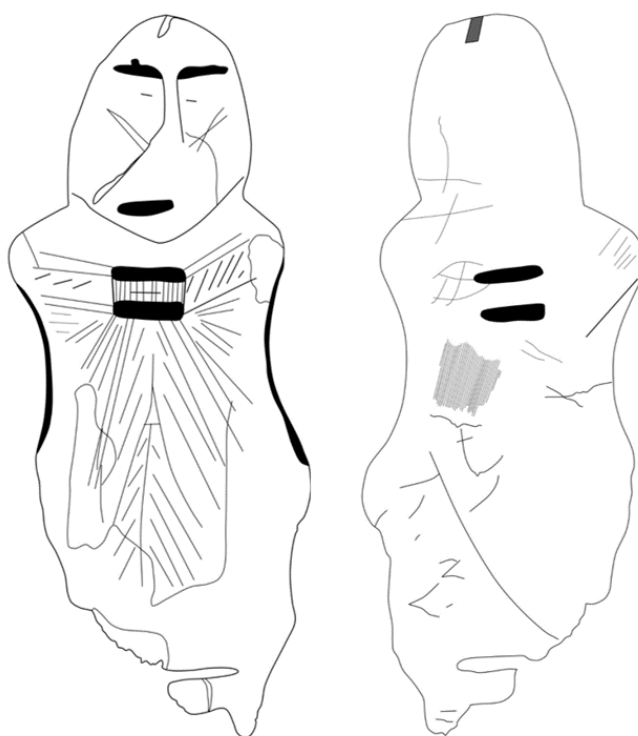
Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling

Object ID: Doll

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: Height 10.01cm, shoulders 3.61cm, head 2.31cm, toggle length 1.02cm, toggle width 1.5mm, weight 74.5g.

Provenance: "Collected by A.E. Thompson, who briefly lived on St. Lawrence Island; purchased by MAI in 1924." Sold along with a number of other items (object category numbers 133440 - 133566). [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: Brown-coloured figure. Carved and incised. Head is an unusual shape - like a stretched trapezium, with deep horizontal incisions at the top of the head for eyes, and some indication of a carved nose. The mouth consists of a deep, yet short, horizontal incision at the very bottom of the head. There is no neck; the 'shoulders' protrude from the sides of the head. Below this the shape becomes very irregular, with no arm or legs. The bottom appears to be

broken. There is a set of toggles at the top of the torso, and Lenz (1986, 14) notes that another set is barely visible at the bottom.

“Spurred lines in Okvik style decorate the small ivory figure...Although the lower part of the face is broken, tattoo marks can still be seen on the cheeks. The two sets of toggle holes (only a remnant of the second set remains) suggest that the figure may have been fastened to clothing, perhaps as a protective charm or a spirit helper for a shaman’s coat” (Lenz 1986, 14).

Notes: Shamanic role: toggle holes suggest this could have been fastened to clothes (Lenz 1986, 14). An unusually-shaped doll, perhaps as a result of the raw material being used? Or could this have something to do with its shamanic role?

Polish hotspots:

- On the area surrounding the toggle holes on the back, i.e. where it would have been attached to clothing
- On the bridge of the nose, and hints of polish on the forehead
- On the edges of the breakage, and the toggles
- On the edges generally.

Alaska (exact location unknown)

Catalogue no. 090141.000

Object type:

Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure part/fragment

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 4.45cm, width 3.74cm, depth 2.6cm, weight 111g.

Provenance: Unknown

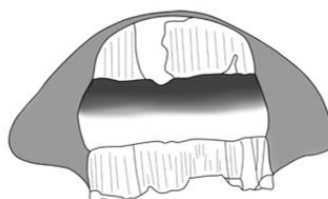
Description: Carving of human head made of (fossilised?) ivory. Oval shaped, but the bottom of the head is flat - underneath there is a



Front



Back



Underside

large groove, which shows signs of breakage. Likely that this was attached onto something - this seems an odd way to join something, though, which suggests to me that it's not a doll, but maybe a charm or amulet instead. It could have been fastened to a boat, for example.

The facial features are very basic, with two large holes for eyes, two small vertical lines for the nostrils and a small horizontal slit for the mouth. The nose is carved out to be broad and long. The eyes could potentially have been inlaid with something, though there are no traces of anything within the eye holes. In the centre of each cheek a small circle has been carved. Around the eyes and mouth are a series of radiating lines which could represent tattoos. These lines seem to have been carved on after the patina had been formed, which suggests an extended use-life.

The head is fairly heavily patinated all over the surface of the face and the back - both sides are patinated in the centre.

Polish hotspots:

- Not that many, but the patina obscures a lot - through the patina you can see polish on the face
- The right cheek and chin - definitely
- Interestingly, little polish on or around the groove at all, apart from at the very edges.

Catalogue number: 235654.000

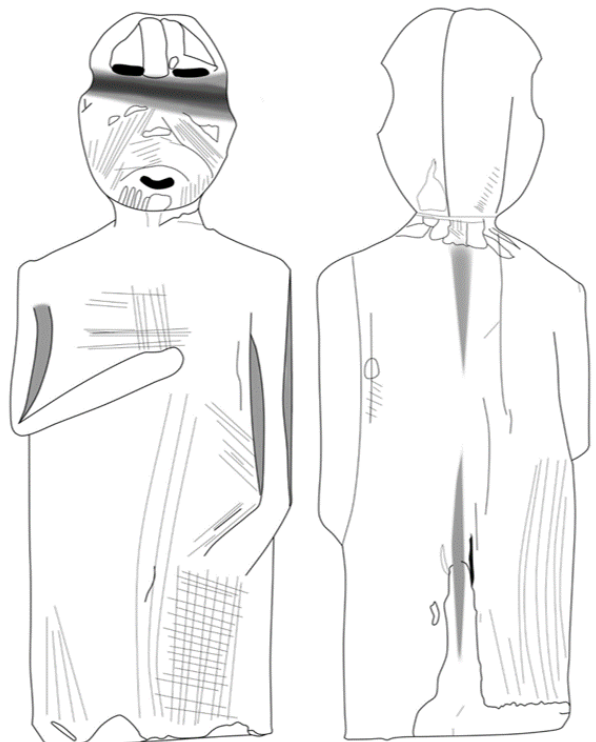
Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure part/fragment

Material: Fossilised ivory

Dimensions: height 5.76cm, head width 1.36cm, body width 2.05cm, body depth 1.48cm, weight 50g.

Provenance: 'Harry Bijur gift; Nathan Bijur Collection'. Originally listed as "carved fossil ivory fetish in form of a human". Some sold, some donated by Madeline and Harry Bijur, but previously owned by Judge Nathan Bijur.



Gift record slip notes the date received as April 10, 1965, and the gift value as \$9830 (18 items in total) or \$3215 (the documentation is very vague about the items to which it is referring). [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Small dark brown figure in the shape of a human. The head is oval-shaped and has facial features carved onto it. The face is an unusual form - the carvings to mark facial features are quite large and deep, compared to many of the other figurines, and the face has a harsh countenance. There is a deep horizontal carving across the middle of the face, and at either side, further ivory has been carved away - perhaps to represent ears? It is difficult to tell, but this carving may be to represent eyes, but there are two short horizontal lines above this - at first glance this looks like eyes, but could be eyebrows. The cheeks are small, almost pointed, and very prominent, and sharp lines across diagonally below each cheek, towards the bottom edge of the face. The nose is short and wide, and has been damaged, so would originally have been a little more prominent. Under the nose is another deep carving spanning the lower part of the face, and underneath this, a small horizontal line may represent the mouth. There is some damage to the chin, but despite this it is possible to tell that the chin jutted out ahead of the rest of the face.

The head narrows to a neck, which then broadens out towards the shoulders. The torso is straight, but wider at the top to represent the arms, which are quite thin and flat. The right arm is bent at the elbow across the torso, while the left arm is placed along the side of the torso, bending at the 'wrist' to represent the hand. There are no legs, and the figure is flat at the bottom, stopping just below the left hand.

On the back, the torso becomes wider at the back around where the buttocks are, and there is a notch in the middle - can't tell whether this was intentional or just damage? There are a number of horizontal cracks spanning the back of the figure.

Notes: Was it meant to stand up, hence the flat bottom? The figure can't stand up - the weight isn't balanced, so if you tried to balance it upright, it would fall forward. There are some areas towards the bottom which are very shiny, but this is where varnish has dripped on the figure.

Polish hotspots:

- Hard to tell as so much of the object is shiny, plus there is varnish
- Brows, and edges of damaged parts of the face

- Front of right hand.

Banks Island, Canada

Catalogue number: 024321.000

Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 20.5cm, head width 4.8cm, shoulders 5.5cm, belt 4.1cm, feet 3.1cm, weight 1.346kg.

Provenance: Sold by G.T. Emmons, a collector, to MAI on December 21st, 1909 (price \$345 for objects 024318-024335). [From NMAI Collections report].

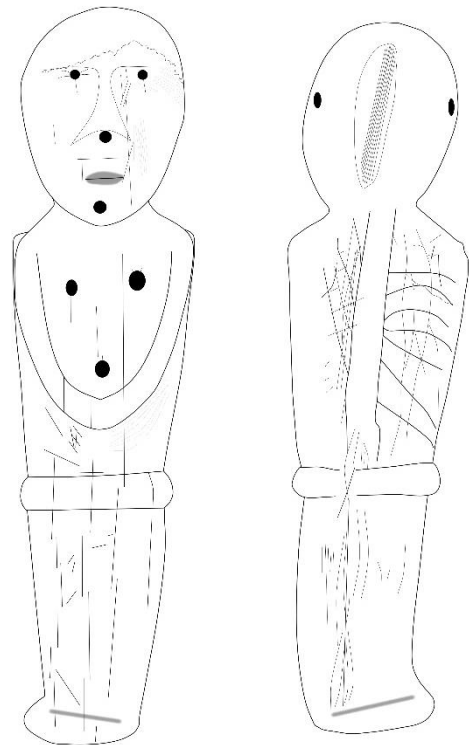
Description: Carved figure in the shape of a human.

Oval-shaped head is unrealistically large, as wide as the shoulders. Facial features have been carved. Head tapers down to barely-there neck which then broadens out into shoulders. The torso and legs have little definition - each shoulder down to the feet is a straight line, narrowing in width along the way. The arms are in front of the torso, not to the side, with both hands clasped together in the centre. On the torso are carved nipples and navel, and under the navel is a protruding line, which appears to be a belt of some sort. At the bottom of the figurine, the feet are simply carved, with another protruding line. There are a series of small carved holes all over the figurine: 2 for eyes, 2 for ears, 1 under the nose, 1 at the chin, 2 for nipples and one for navel. Possible that these were originally inlaid, or were meant to be inlaid with something? There are 3 long vertical cracks along the front. On the back, the surface is slightly dipped - the dip is a vertical line from top to bottom.

Notes: Surface is highly polished.

Polish hotspots:

- Face
- Edges of holes



- Most protruding points, i.e. feet.

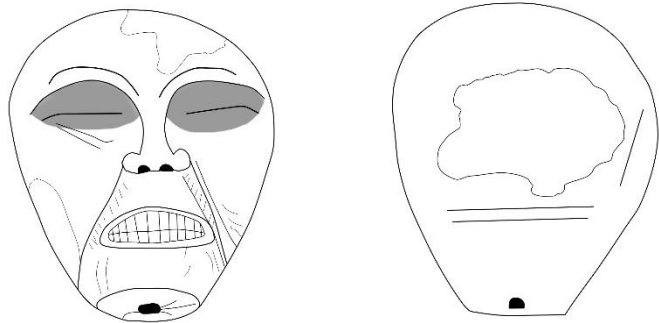
Catalogue number: 024322.000

Object type:

Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory (fossilised?)



Dimensions: height 3.44cm, greatest width 3.01cm, greatest depth 2.2cm (but may originally have been a little larger, pre-damage), weight 75.5g.

Provenance: "Collected by Lieutenant George T. Emmons...at an unknown date; purchased by George Heye from George T. Emmons in 1909." [From NMAI Collections report] Sold by G.T. Emmons, a collector, to MAI on December 21st, 1909 (price \$345 for objects 024318-024335).

Description: Dark brown (fossilised ivory?). Carved head. Shaped like a very rounded upside-down triangle. The carving of the face is quite defined, with the eyes, brows, nose, cheeks and mouth all clear. The mouth is open, with the teeth bared. It may have been attached to something, as at the back of the base there is a rectangular hole, probably for attaching or threading to something else. The back of the head has a large patch of damage, and there are a number of lines at the bottom, which could be manufacturing marks perhaps (e.g. a file?).

Polish hotspots:

- Nose
- Brows, cheeks and bottom of chin
- On back - polish around the edges of the damaged part and on some of the damage itself
- Base is quite polished - was this attached to something? Did it rub against something?

Catalogue number: 090131.000

Object type: Ceremonial/ritual items: shamanic objects

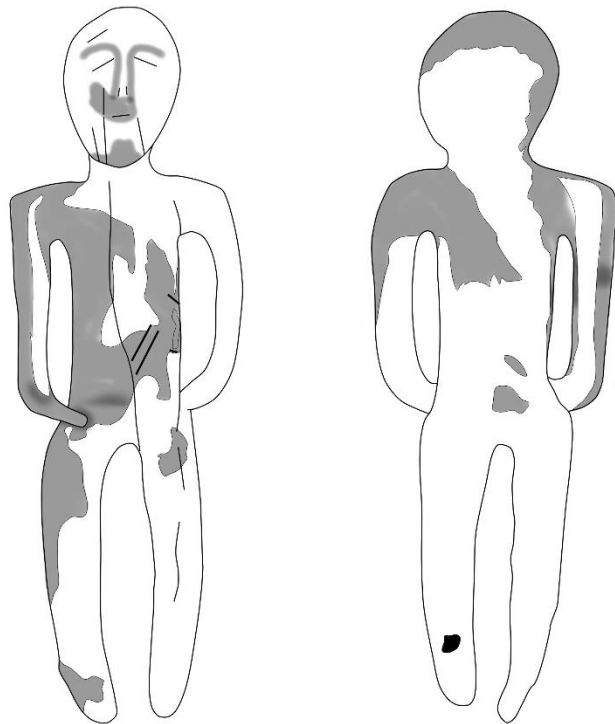
Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory (fossilised?)

Dimensions: height 6.99cm, width 2.18cm, weight 32.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1919." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: This figure has fairly realistic proportions. The head is small and rounded, and tapers to a short, barely-there neck which broadens out to the shoulders. The head is slightly upturned, so it looks like the figure is



looking upwards. Facial features are carved in, with 2 small grooves for eyes, and a small incision for the mouth. The grooves on either side of the face - are these intentional? Tattoos, perhaps? The arms are carved out and run alongside the body, but the hands point inwards and rest on the hips. It almost looks like the hands are held in pockets. The legs, too, are carved apart, but are positioned closer at the bottom of the legs. The right leg is slightly behind the figure. The feet are very small and point ahead. Along the right hand side, where there's no damage, you can see what appear to be manufacturing marks - they look like long scrapes. Lots of tiny holes and scratches, likely damage. Many filled with dirt.

Notes: Shaman's amulet? (Smith and Guadagno 1980, 41). The ivory is fairly damaged, making wear difficult to see. Mottled surface in a lot of places. Almost all the area that aren't damaged show polish. The edges/sides which would have been touched most.

Polish hotspots:

- Wherever there is no damage
- Along the outer sides of the arms and on the front of the right hand
- Tip of the nose
- On the front of the body, where there is no damage.

Catalogue number: 090132.000

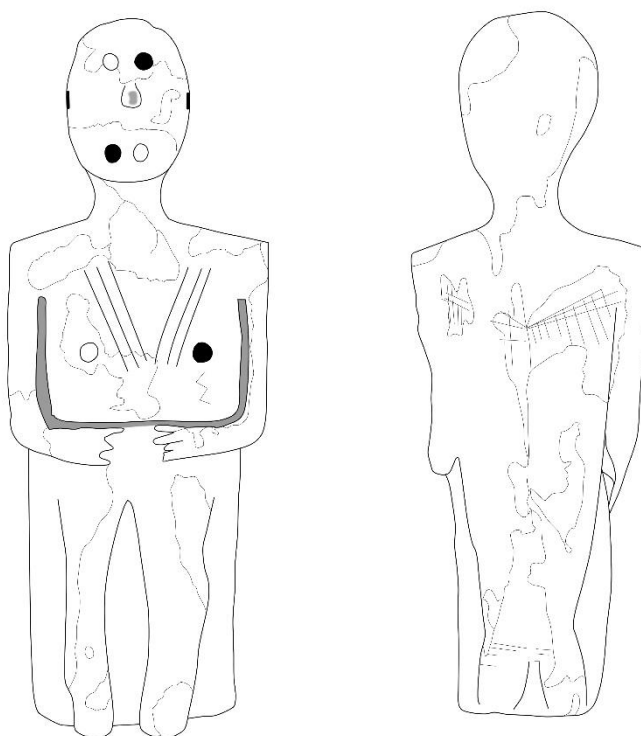
Object type:

Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure**Material:** Ivory

Dimensions: height 8.71cm,
shoulders 2.73cm, head 1.51cm,
depth 2cm, weight 126g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source circa 1919." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: This figure is short and stout. The head is fairly large in proportion to the rest of the body, and is rounded. The neck is proportional, and broadens out to shoulders. The arms are straight along the sides, and become clearer as they cross horizontally across the torso, with the hands meeting in the middle. The legs are carved apart from one another, and are short and stout. At the end of the legs, the feet are visible as slightly broader areas, pointing to the front.

The facial features are not clearly visible, apart from the nose which has been carved. There are 2 holes for eyes, 2 for ears, 2 around the mouth (labrets?) and 2 for nipples. One of the eyes, one of the labrets and one of the nipples are plugged with some sort of dark substance.

The legs are ahead of the torso - they begin straight under the hands. There is an additional block at the back, from which the legs are separated.

Polish hotspots:

- Nose
- Cheeks (particularly the one on the right)
- Along the grooves on the chest
- The parts of the arm and legs that aren't damaged
- Back of the head
- Parts of the back that aren't damaged

- The most polished areas are the tip of the nose, the chest (around the grooved area) and the left cheek.

Iñupiat

Point Barrow

Catalogue number: 036105.000

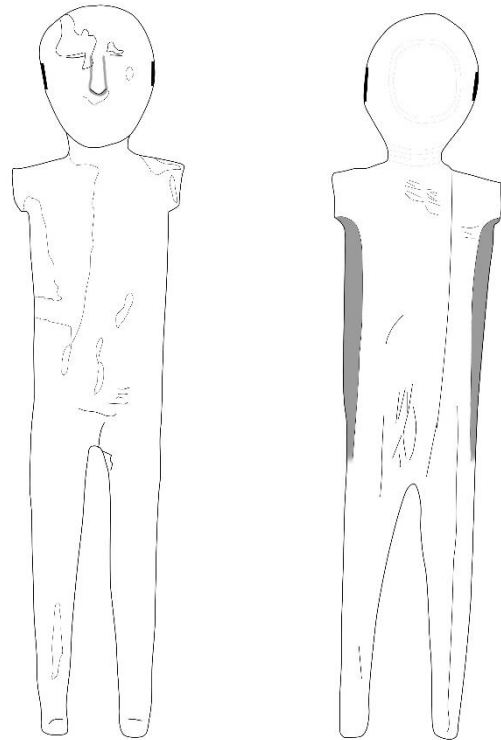
Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Fossilised ivory

Dimensions: height 8.16cm, head width 1.1cm, shoulder width 1.64cm, max depth 0.9cm, weight 31.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown, formerly in the collection of J. Dalston; purchased by George Heye from an unknown source in 1914." Again, collections notes are very vague - Acquisition method listed as 'Purchase (presumably)'.



Description: A small ivory doll. Small oval head, with two small horizontal incisions for the eyes. The nose is very shallowly carved out, but the extent of damage to the face makes it impossible to discern whether there are any other facial features. There are two holes on either side of the head, where the ears would be, and these are filled with some sort of dark material, but it's impossible to tell whether this was deliberate or not. The neck is short, and at the bottom broadens out to the shoulders. The shoulders jut out a little at the sides as there are no arms - this is very likely because the doll was meant to be dressed. The torso is completely straight, and save for a few scratches towards the bottom, is very highly polished. There are a number of patches of damage on the torso as well, and the ivory is quite wrinkled in places. The legs point straight down, and have been carved separately, so are quite thin. At the bottom of the legs are the two feet, which are tiny and point straight ahead. On the back, a number of long, thin cracks can be seen in the ivory.

Polish hotspots:

Overall, this is a very polished figurine, on the spots that aren't damaged.

- Greatest degree of polish
 - Front of the figurine
 - Back of the legs
- Lesser degree of polish
 - Back of the head and back of the torso.

Catalogue number: 053222.000

Object type: Games, Toys,

Gambling: Dolls

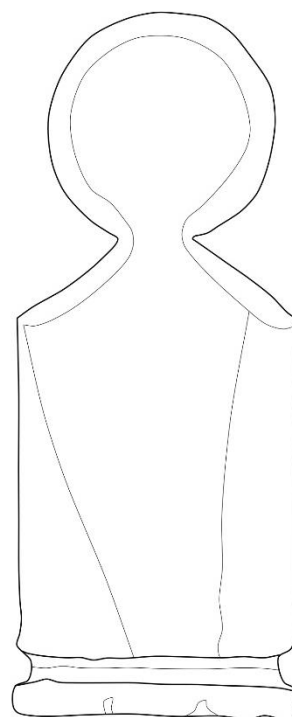
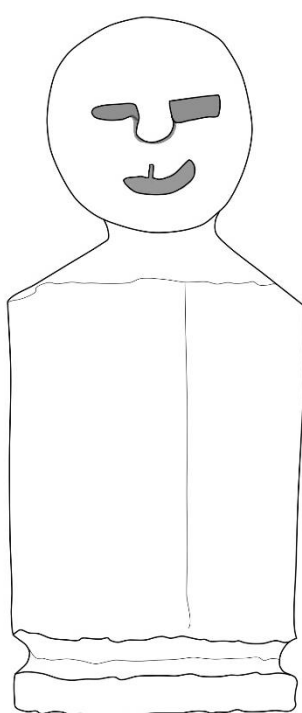
Object ID: Doll

Material: Wood

Dimensions: 3.4cm x 1.4cm
x 0.7cm, weight 1.4g.

Provenance: "Collection
history unknown;
purchased by MAI in 1916
from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop
(Seattle, Washington), which
was owned and operated

by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].



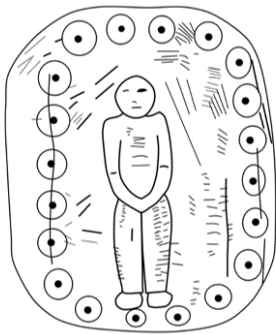
Description: Tiny wooden doll. Archival documentation calls it a "small wooden ikon or idol". Round wooden head with incised eyes and mouth. Hint of a nose. The eyes and mouth are filled with some dark substance. There is a hint of a neck, after which the shoulders slope down to either side. The torso is straight, but there is a groove all the way around close to the bottom of the doll, presumably to attach something. The doll has no arms or legs, and ends at the bottom of the torso.

Polish hotspots:

- Top of head
- Nose
- Chin.

No discernible polish in the bottom groove.

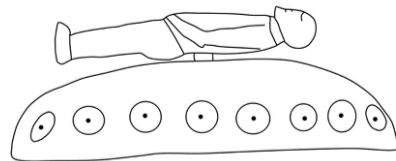
Catalogue number: 053225.000



Front



Back



Side

Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 4.35cm, width 3.54cm, depth 1.71cm, [height of doll 3.07cm, width 1cm], weight 80.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1916 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A small ivory doll on an ivory base. The base is at most 1cm thick, is a curved rectangle shape, curving up towards the middle, making it a rounded base. The edge of the base is carved all the way around with a circle-and-dot motif, which is a very common form of decoration among the Inupiaq. The base is made of a light creamy ivory, but on the back it looks quite dirty and scuffed. On both sides the base is covered in scratches and cracks, some a result of the natural material, some likely from the manufacturer, and others from use

and/or wear. On the back of the base, there are a number of large yet shallow horizontal scratches, and towards the top there are traces of some sort of red material - ochre?

The doll itself is very small, and would have needed considerable skill to carve. It is attached to the base using what appears to be a small ivory peg inserted in the figure's back. The doll is a little person with a small round head. There is no neck, and the shoulders are straight. There are two arms, which reach down the sides of the body and meet in the middle of the torso - again a very common design. The legs are thick compared to other dolls, but this isn't surprising given the size of the doll - legs any thinner may have been too difficult to carve and/or more likely to break. The legs are carved straight and slightly apart from one another, and end in two small feet at the bottom of the legs.

The doll is a much darker colour to the base - though this is a result of the amount of scuff marks and dirt on the doll, as the front of the feet are much more polished, and are a cream colour.

Polish hotspots:

- The base has been smoothed, but there is actual polish around the edges, and some on the back, too, even over the scratches
- The doll shows quite a lot of polish on the front and sides - particularly the hands, arms, front of feet and the front of the face
 - Interestingly the front of the feet are very polished and 'clean'-looking in comparison - the colour of them is completely different to the rest of the doll.

Catalogue number: 054284.000

Object type: Personal items

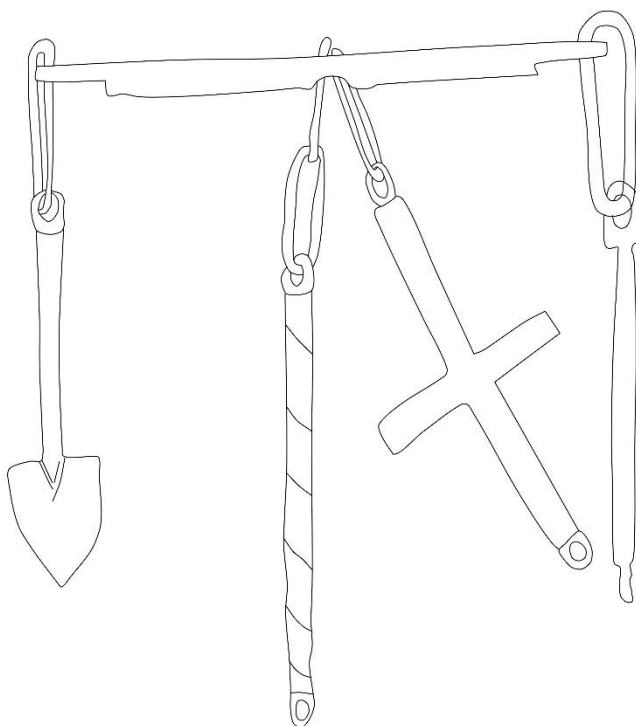
Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 11.5cm x 6.7cm x 1.4cm, weight 14.9g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1916 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Ivory charm with ornaments (crucifix, shovel) attached. 4 'ornaments' are attached to a flat rectangular ivory board with 4 holes for them (2 in the middle and one on either end). In the middle are a crucifix and a long pole with a long incised line all the way down. At one end is a shovel, and at the other end what might be a needle, or a stick. All are connected to the board with a chain link (the pole is at the bottom of 2 chain links).



Notes: Crucifix - Christian? This is quite a modern example, and may have been made for sale, as there are very few, if any, marks of use.

Polish hotspots: On some of the edges and corners there is a small amount of polish, but it's not that noticeable.

Catalogue number: 054288.000

Object type: Games, toys, gambling: dolls

Object ID: Male doll

Material: Ivory, hide

Dimensions: height 11.44cm, greatest width 4.32cm, depth 1.97cm, weight 254.5g.

Provenance: Created circa 1900. "Collection history unknown; purchased by



MAI in 1916 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Clothed ivory doll of unusual form. The head is an elongated oval shape, and at the sides of the head have been carved two long thin branches - is this meant to represent hair? Horizontal incisions mark the eyes, and these have been carved quite deep, and filled with a black substance. The nose has been carved long and thin. Another horizontal incision marks the mouth, and this too has been filled with the same black substance as the eyes. All over the face, there are tiny marks - from manufacture perhaps? The neck widens out to broad shoulders, but due to the clothing it's unclear what the form of the doll under the clothing is. The clothing, which is made of hide, is very hard and does not give any clues as to the form of the doll underneath. The clothing consists of a very carefully sewn brown and white coat with a hood, long sleeves and a thin belt, through which a long, thin, ivory tool has been hung. It's clear this is a fairly modern figure as the string sewn through the jacket looks like modern string, as opposed to some sort of twine. The coat is darker in some patches, likely where it's been touched, held or rested on a surface.

Two hands poke out from the bottom of the sleeves. Both are made of ivory, and both are shaped like thick cylinders, with holes through the middle. Were they made from beads which had already been perforated, or were these holes to fasten the figurine to something?

The legs are also of unusual design. They look almost like they're wearing short trousers - the tops of the legs are brown, which appears to be a feature of the ivory itself, and the bottom of the legs are thinner and white. The feet are sturdy, and point out in front - the toes are brown - again a feature of the material, but was this purposeful? Either way, the feet almost look like hooves. The legs may originally have had trousers on, and these could have got lost/damaged.

Notes: Unusual design. Ann McMullen thinks it may be a representation of a Westerner. But Smith and Guadagno (1980) have simply listed it as a doll, giving it as an example of the kind of thing used by children.

Polish hotspots:

- Feet

- Nose
- Rest of face (to a lesser extent, it's fairly smooth so it's hard to tell if it's really polish)
- Hands (to a small extent).

Fairly smooth all over but very little polish. Unusual design and lack of polish makes me wonder whether this was made for sale.

Catalogue number: 054288.000

Object type:

Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height

6.56cm, head width

1.34cm, greatest width

3.6cm, greatest depth

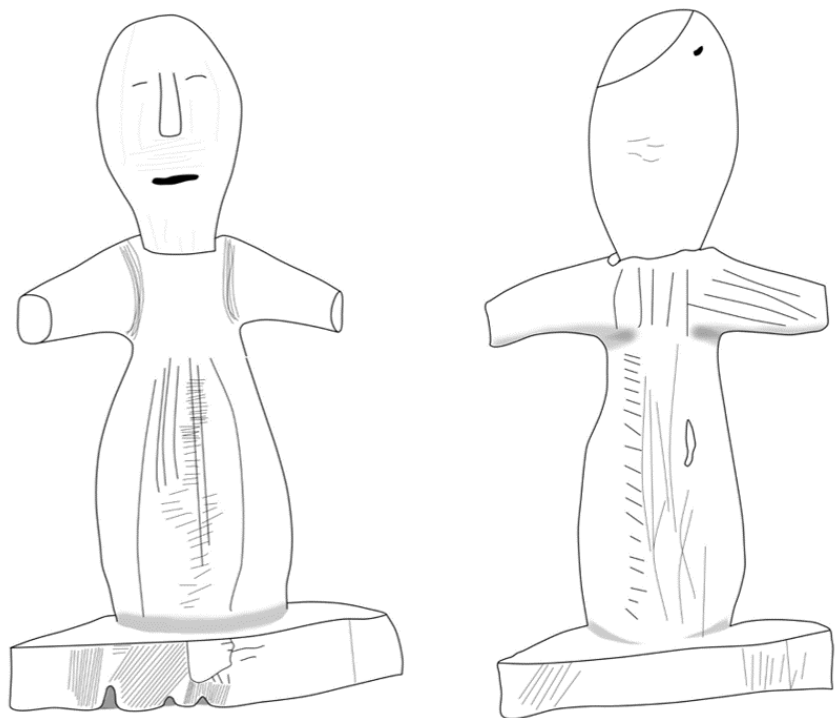
2.05cm, weight 94g.

Provenance: "Collection

history unknown;

purchased by MAI in

1916 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: A small ivory figurine on a pedestal. The head and neck are a separate piece of ivory from the rest, but is inserted into the other very securely. The head is oval shaped, with two small incisions for the eyes and a larger incision for the mouth. All three are filled with some sort of dark substance. The brows have not been carved but the nose has. Underneath the mouth the neck has been carved, and all over the face you can see where tools were used to scrape the ivory and carve the face. The body and pedestal are made from another piece of ivory, and this is much dirtier and much more scuffed than the other. The body is an unusual shape - the two arms stick out to the sides, and are quite thick and short. The body

almost looks like it's wearing clothing, like a long dress or tunic. The torso broadens out slightly as it reaches the bottom, and then there is an oval pedestal, which is just under a centimetre thick. The bottom of the pedestal is rough and dirty, and has a large number of nicks and scratches on it.

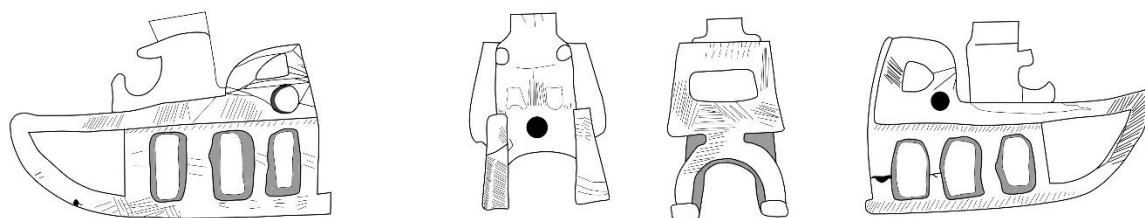
Notes: Made from 2 pieces - and like the other, the head is the part that is different from the rest. Darker surface on the back of the head – was this made from a tooth? This looks like it was made in a hurry, or simply left unfinished - likely for sale? Listed on NMAI Collections report as a snowman, but I'm not sure where this information came from. If it was a snowman, that would be a very unusual form, but if it was for sale, that would fit with what we know about Western explorers asking for particular forms to be carved, and Native artists carving subjects that they thought Westerners might want to buy.

Polish hotspots:

- Most polish is on the back of the head, and the front and back of the torso
- Less polish on the face and top of the head, the arms and the pedestal.

Almost no polish on the pedestal at all.

Catalogue number: 056423.000



Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: length 3.24cm, width 1.41cm, height 2.32cm, weight 20.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1916 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940), using funds donated by MAI trustee James B. Ford (1844-1928)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Small carving of a person(?) sat on a sled. The sled and person have been very carefully carved from one piece of ivory, with two long curved runners connected to the top platform by 4 arched slats, and curving up and around at the front to form the rails. At the back of the sled there is a raised platform (/handle?). On the top of the sled there is a small, stout figure with its arms and legs pointed out in front of it. The figure's head is very flat on top, but it's unclear whether it was broken off or simply made this way. I am inclined to think the latter, as if it broke it was an extremely clean, straight break, and there are tiny microscopic bits of dirt on the top - though if it was broken, this suggests use after it was broken. On the top platform/handles there are two asymmetric holes on either side, which are joined together by a tunnel in the middle - was this to string the figurine or to hang it onto something? As a result of this tunnel, the top of the platform may have become thinner and weakened, as a small patch of ivory has broken off, exposing the tunnel through. There is also a hole under the person, facing ahead - maybe something was meant to be inlaid here?

Notes: The carving hasn't been smoothed out extensively. Considering this, and the form of the thing itself, perhaps this was made for sale, as this items tended to be less polished.

Polish hotspots:

- Runners.

Catalogue number: 077096.000

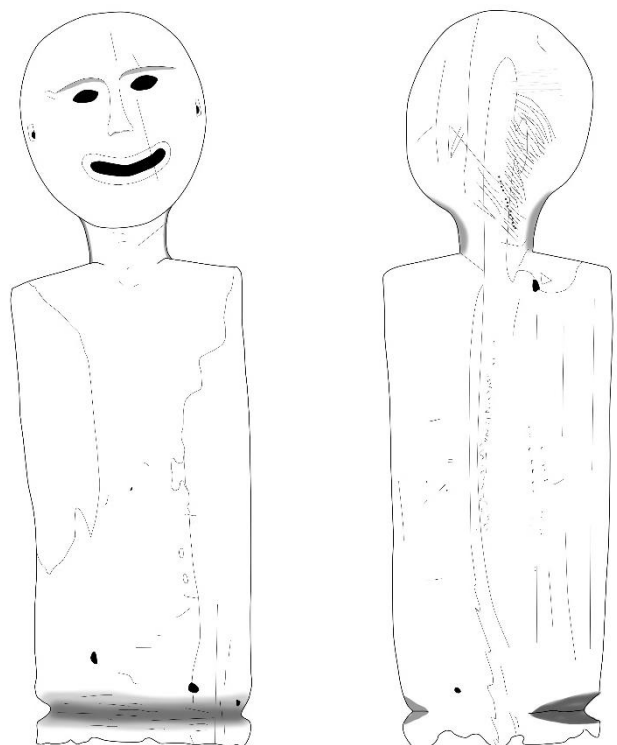
Object type: Ceremonial/ritual items:
shamanic objects

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory, copper

Dimensions: height 23.6cm, head width 5.8cm, shoulder width 6.7cm, base width 6.4cm, depth 3.5cm, weight 3.1165kg.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1918." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: Large ivory doll. Head is a large, rounded oval shape, and from the side is fairly flat. Eyes are made of copper, which has been inlaid into the face. The brow, nose and mouth have all been carved, though the mouth is much deeper and clearer, and is slightly upturned. The nose originally had 2 carved nostrils which joined together at the back, but there has been breakage so there is now only one hole.

Around the top of the head, there is a deep incision, which comes down either side to the ears, where there are holes at the ears, very likely where earrings were attached. Particularly on the figure's left ear, the ivory has become worn down and indented, likely from earrings that it wore.

Under the head is the neck, which is fairly long for one of these figurines, though is of a realistic length. The neck broadens out to shoulders, and the torso is the same shape the whole way down. There are no physical features below the neck. The torso forms one homogeneous block, apart from a wide, deep incision around the bottom. The whole figure is highly polished.

Notes: Dockstader (1974) - would have been dressed in a costume at some point in the past. Used by shamans in ceremonies, and such dolls are made of a variety of materials. "Apparently this one's ears and nose were ornamented with beadwork which has since disappeared."

The figure is highly polished, and there are a large number of scratches which show polishing - this was likely handling polish.

Polish hotspots:

- Cheeks, brow and nose
- Chin (not as much as the rest of the face, but still very polished)
- Shoulders are highly polished, both on top and on the front and back
- Back of the head, where it would have been laying
- On the back, along the left hand side.

The attachment doesn't show any polish, but the engraving comes down to the ears - could this have been for earrings? Seems strange to have such a big engraving just for earrings though, considering that there are already holes by the ears.

Catalogue number: 082621.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

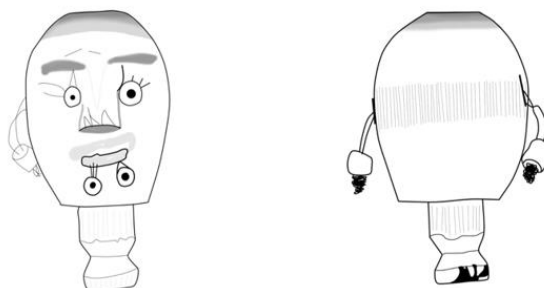
Object ID: Doll part/fragment

Material: Wood, glass beads

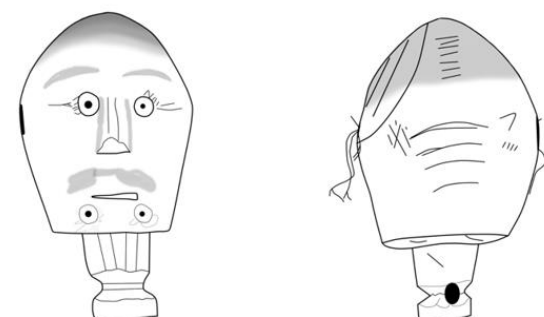
Dimensions:

- Smaller doll head: height 3.69cm, width 2.11cm, greatest depth 2.01cm, weight 11.5g
- Larger doll head: height 4.28cm, width 2.44cm, greatest depth 2.19cm, weight 15g.

Smaller head



Larger head



Provenance: "Collected between 1894 and 1907 by Captain Dorr F. Tozier (1843-1926, associated with the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service); Tozier's collection was purchased in 1909 by the Washington State Art Association (Seattle, Washington); when the Association defaulted on its payments for the collection in 1916, it became the property of the Seattle Land Improvement Company, owned by Fred E. Sander (1854-1921); in 1917, George Louis Berg (1868-1941, director of the Washington State Art Association) negotiated on Fred Sander's behalf to sell the collection, which was purchased that year by MAI using funds donated by MAI's Board of Trustees." [From NMAI Collections report].

Archival information shows that the Tozier Collection consisted of dozens of boxes and chests filled with objects. It's impossible to tell which box these were held in as the original catalogue list was so vague.

Description: 2 wooden doll heads inlaid with blue glass beads for eyes and under the mouth for labrets. Both heads are rounded, with a flat chin, and the larger head is slightly pointed at the top. Underneath there are what may be necks, but these are more likely to be attachments - long cylindrical pieces of wood with incisions in the middle. Could these have been tied to something, or attached to something? From each side of the smaller head hang two blue beads on some sort of string, to represent earrings. It looks like originally the larger

head would have had the same thing, but now there is only a piece of string hanging from the left ear.

The noses on both heads are carved in very broad shapes, and wood has been cut away to insert the eye beads. There is dark staining on quite a lot of the beads, for the brows, above the upper lip and on the head - this looks like staining done on purpose. Maybe oil was rubbed in? However it was done, it was very delicately done as the eyebrows are quite thin. The mouths consist of small horizontal incisions, and on the smaller head, there is some string between one of the labrets and the mouth.

Polish hotspots:

On smaller head

- Brows are very polished
- The bridge of the nose
- Cheeks
- Back of head.

On larger head

- The bridge of the nose
- Brows - underneath the staining, there are thin lines of polish
- Cheeks
- Back of the head.

Catalogue number: 146994.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

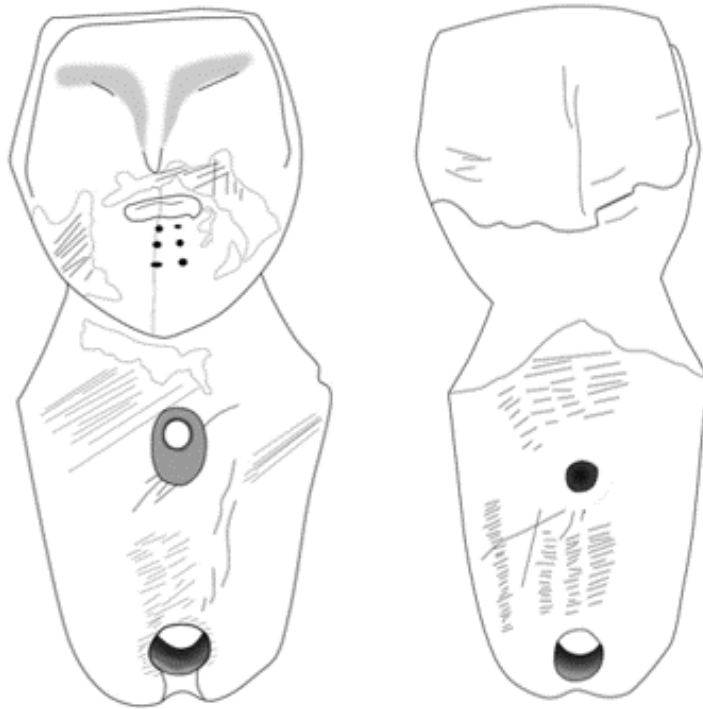
Object ID: Doll

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 6.25cm, head width 2.63cm, shoulder width 2.52cm, greatest depth 2.16cm, weight 125.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1926." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A small ivory doll. Unusual form - was definitely attached to something at the bottom. Head is trapezoidal, with a broad face. The eyes are marked by 2 small incisions, one of which may be a little damaged. The nose and brows have been shallowly carved. The cheeks are broad. The mouth is horizontal but slightly open. Under the



mouth, there are two vertical rows of three dots - does this represent a tattoo? Around the top of the head there is an incised line, perhaps a mask or somewhere to attach hair? The head tapers to a short neck, which then broadens out to the torso. This figure is unusual; the head is slightly wider than the torso, and the torso is extremely small. There are two holes in the torso, one in the middle and one at the bottom. Both go all the way through the doll, from front to back. The bottom hole shows clear signs of repeated use, as the outer loop has been worn down, likely by something being tied to it. It's hard to tell whether the top hole has been used.

There are tiny scratches all over the body, which are noticeable on the areas which have not been damaged.

Notes: Is this a doll? Or a toggle? The holes suggest it was attached to something, especially as there are two.

Could the hole at the bottom have been an attaching hole for legs? However, the wear patterns do not match up with other dolls, where string is looped through and around the sides.

Polish hotspots:

- Brows, nose and cheeks (most polished)

- Back of head and body
- Patch of damage on the front - you can see polish on top of it.

Catalogue number: 155964.000



Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 16.6cm x 5cm x 1.4cm, weight 126.1g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1927." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Long, thin ivory hunting charm carved to represent three human faces. There is a great deal of damage and patina on the faces, so it is difficult to see the full level of detail on the front, but there is a lot of decoration. Between two of the faces there are circular incisions, along with a number of lines around the face, and between two of the faces there are triangular incisions. The noses carved are long and thin, and the mouths are open with teeth bared. The eyes are simply round holes, and there are incisions for the brows on the face on the right. There are some designs on the left hand side but it's difficult to see their full form due to the level of damage.

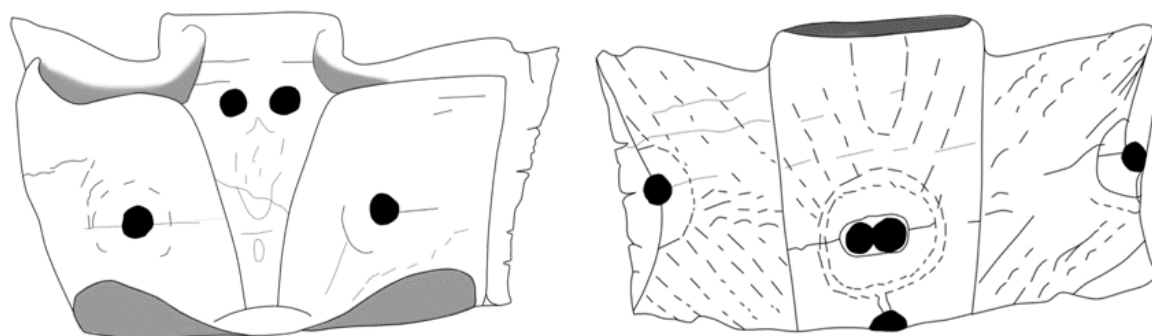
On the back, the charm is less damaged, though still heavily patinated. The back is fairly shiny, with no decoration.

Polish hotspots:

- The back - even through the patina.

The front is quite heavily patinated, but a slight degree of polish can be seen on the small sections that aren't damaged.

Catalogue number: 209351.000



Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Animal bone

Dimensions: 8.4cm x 5cm x 2.8cm, weight 84.3g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1946 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Fragment of a whaling fetish. 4 symmetrical holes on the front, 2 in the middle and one on either side. On the front there are 3 deeply engraved lines - one horizontal one at the bottom, and 2 vertical lines towards the middle. Either side of the charm is broken - likely that this was originally much larger (like 208926.000). On the back, there are 4 more symmetrical holes, again in the middle and to the sides. If you hold the charm up to the light you can see patterns of decoration which appear to have become extremely worn down over time. They consist of diagonal lines and circles, a little like the decorations on 155962.000 only much wider and yet more faint. The decoration looks like it was carved as a series of dots or dashes rather than full lines. On the front there are even fainter traces of decoration.

Notes: Similar in form to 155962.000 and 208926.000.

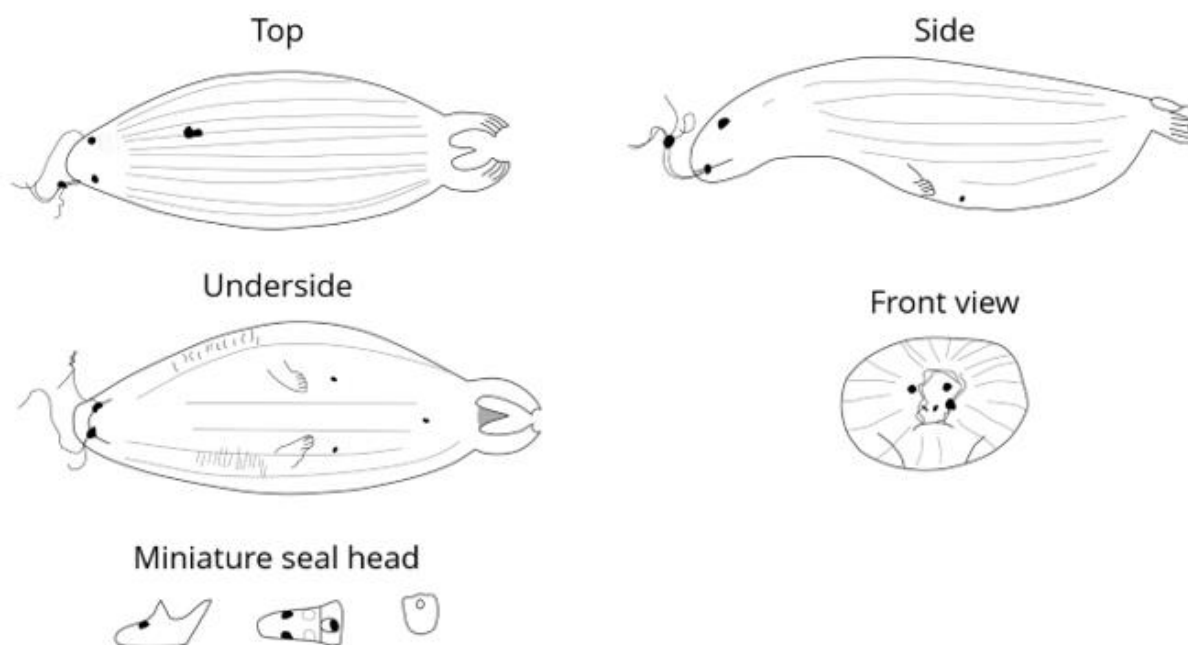
Polish hotspots:

- Top edge around the middle
- Side edges at the front
- Back side.

The front shows some shine, but overall it isn't very polished.

The archival documentation seems to list this as an idol, but it is really hard to tell from the handwriting.

Catalogue number: 223955.000



Object type: Sculpture/Carving/Figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: length 5.05cm, width 1.93cm, depth 1.54cm, weight 43.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1954 from the Julius Carlebach Gallery (New York), operated by Julius Carlebach (1909-1964)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A small ivory carving of a seal "holding a miniature animal's head in mouth". The seal is short and stout, with its flippers clearly visible at one end. The body is rounded, though flatter on the top (the seal's back), and the head is also rounded. The head has 2 incised dots for eyes, two tiny diagonal incisions for nostrils and a long horizontal incision for the mouth. The mouth has 2 small holes on either side which form a tunnel, and through which a light brown thread has been passed. Originally, this thread would likely have held the tiny miniature animal head which is also stored with the seal. It is impossible to tell what animal this represents, but there are two tiny dots for eyes, and a hole at the back, presumably for the thread.

On the underside of the body, in the middle, there are two small fins, which lie flat along the torso. Two dots in the centre represent the nipples - there is another dot down at the bottom, which may represent the genitals. This may therefore be a female seal. The flippers stick out horizontally at the back, and between them there is a small tail. Each flipper has been incised with 4 straight, dark lines to delineate the different digits.

Polish hotspots:

- Greatest degree of polish
 - Stomach and chin show very clear signs of polish.
- Lesser degree
 - The fins underneath, particularly on the outer surface
 - Some of the back, particularly at the edges of the flatter surface.

Smith and Guadagno (1980, 38): "This fat, miniature seal is shown on a hook with a line to which is attached a sub-miniature toggle."

Cape Prince

Catalogue number: 072321.000

Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

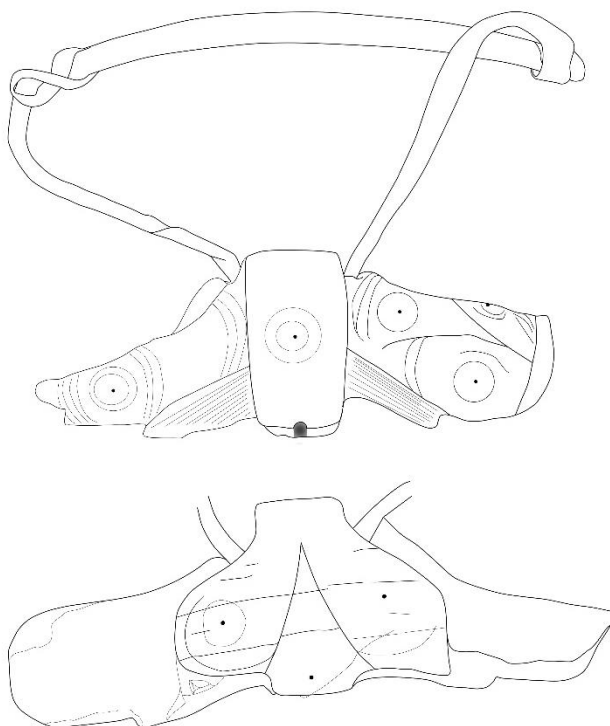
Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory, hide

Dimensions: Handle 25.1cm x 2.1cm x 1.4cm, charm 5cm x 17.7cm x 3.1cm, weight 294.2g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from Joseph Chilberg (1850-1939, a Native artifact dealer in Nome, Alaska) in 1917." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Whale hunter's charm consisting of a long ivory handle from which is suspended a butterfly-shaped object of ivory with incised decoration. The handle and charm are connected by a long piece of hide tied to the handle at both ends. The charm is butterfly-shaped, with a number of symmetrical holes on both



sides - these holes are tiny, almost like dots, and the designs are like a looser version of the common circle-and-dot motif seen elsewhere. There are also several diagonal lines. The left wing is damaged, with the top half having broken off. On the back, there are more circle-and-dot patterns, but less visible decoration overall - the circle around the dot is barely there.

Polish hotspots:

- The handle is much smoother and shinier, maybe partly because it's far less damaged
- There is shine on the front and back surfaces, but little in the way of actual polish.

Catalogue number: 072335.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Ivory, beads

Dimensions: 8.2cm x 1.9cm x 1.2cm, weight 17.4g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from Joseph Chilberg (1850-1939, a Native artifact dealer in Nome, Alaska) in 1917." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Small ivory doll. The head is oval shaped, with incisions to mark the eyes and a tiny mouth. The nose is carved out and is long and thin. On the other side of the head there

are long blue and white earrings, connected by what seems to be a piece of twine. There is also a piece of wood passing through from one side to another, perhaps to keep the earrings in place. The neck is fairly long. The shoulders are very straight, and end in stumps at either side. The doll has no arms. Underneath the stumps, the torso narrows and is straight all the way down. This doll has breasts which have been carved out of the chest, and which are quite long. The legs are long and thin and carved separate from one another, and the feet come together again at the bottom. The legs appear to bend ever so slightly at the knees. There are tiny feet pointing forward. Some sort of sticky residue on the bottom of the feet.



Polish hotspots:

- Nose
- Brow
- Breasts
- Sides of shoulders
- Back of legs at bottom
- Back of head
- Buttocks/bottom of back.

Catalogue number: 072353.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

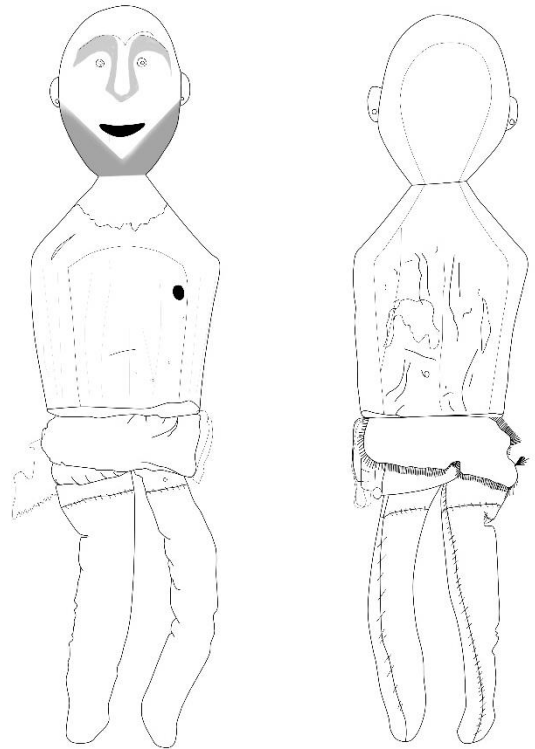
Material: Wood, cotton cloth, glass beads, unknown stuffing

Dimensions: 33.6cm x 7.5cm x 4.3cm, weight 163.6g

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from Joseph Chilberg (1850-1939, a Native artifact dealer in Nome, Alaska) in 1917." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Large wooden doll with soft legs.

The head is large and oval, with tiny red glass beads for eyes and ivory ears. The ears have holes in them - earrings probably originally held here. The brow is broad and slopes down towards a broad nose. The mouth is broad and upturned. The head slopes down to its thinnest point, at which point it broadens out again to the shoulders, which are long and sloping. The length



of the shoulders are almost as long as the torso itself, which is a simple, uncarved piece of wood. It can be reasonably assumed that under the torso there has been carved a smaller stump onto which clothing has been attached. The clothing consists of some sort of fabric made into a belt, onto which are sewn the trousers, which are made from a checked cotton cloth. The legs are stuffed with some sort of soft padding, and end in points at the feet, which are bent a little to differentiate them from the rest of the leg.

Notes: Interestingly, it's difficult to see any polish hotspots, even on the torso, which would have been clothed once.

Nome

Catalogue number: 193432.000

Object type: Sculpture/carving/figures

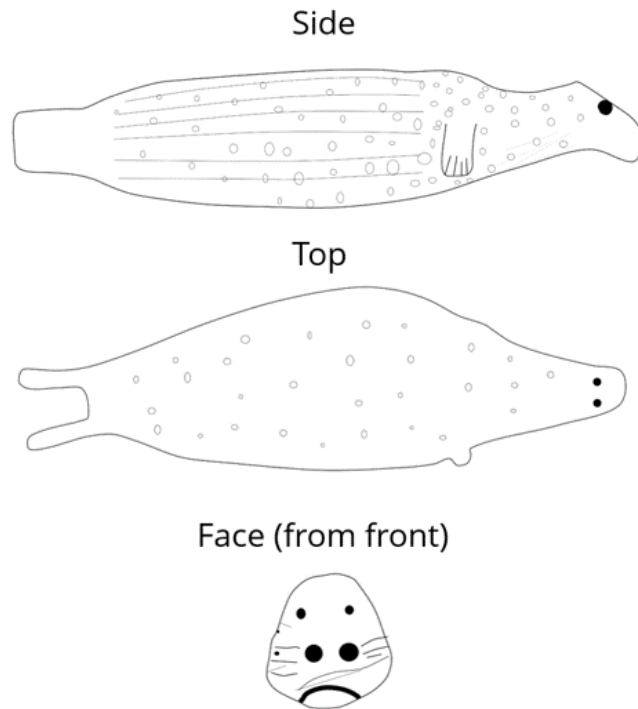
Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: length 4.11cm, width 0.96cm, depth 0.79cm, weight 9.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of William M. Fitzhugh (1853-1929, a San Francisco collector); purchased by MAI from the estate of William M. Fitzhugh in 1936." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A tiny ivory carving of a spotted seal. The proportions of the seal are largely realistic. The head is stretched out a little, and at the front there are two dots for eyes, two for nostrils and a number of more shallow incisions which appear to be the mouth and whiskers. The body is covered in small black dots. Near the head, on either side, there are small flippers, and there are also flippers at the back, which are spread apart as if the seal is in motion. On the seal's underbelly there is a slight dent - is this natural or just a product of the material?



Notes: There isn't a great deal of polish - maybe this was made for sale?

Polish hotspots:

- Perhaps above the tail
- Top of the head
 - The head is smooth, but not really polished.

Catalogue number: 193433.000

Object type: Sculpture/Carving/Figures

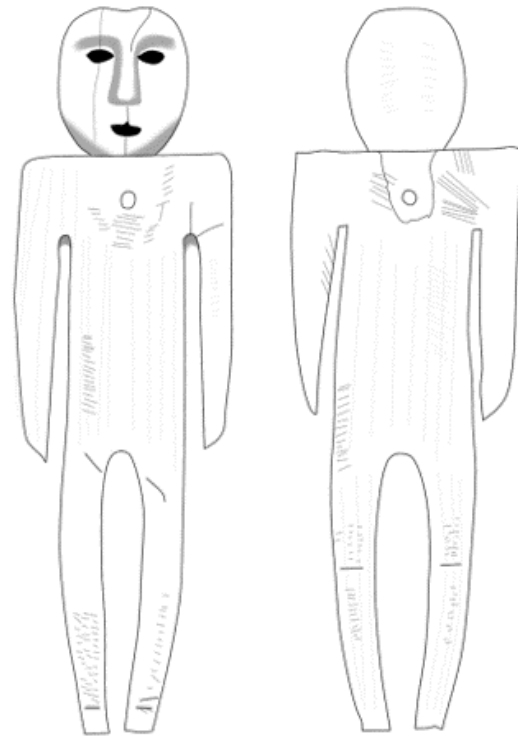
Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 6.36cm, head width 1.21cm, max width 2.11cm, max depth 1.48cm, weight 35g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of William M. Fitzhugh (1853-1929, a San Francisco collector); purchased by MAI from the estate of William M. Fitzhugh in 1936." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A small ivory figure of a man. The head and body are carved from two separate pieces of ivory which have been joined together by an ivory 'pin' straight through the chest - the head must have slotted in, and been secured with this. The head is oval-shaped, with small oval incisions for the eyes and mouth - all 3 are



also filled with some sort of black substance. The nose and some of the facial structure have been carved by taking away only 3 portions of the ivory - this fairly simple approach to carving means that, if you look at the head from the bottom, it looks triangular. Where the ears are, the ivory is a slightly different colour - if this was done on purpose, this would imply considerable skill in working the material, though the rest of the face is carved quite simply in comparison to the others in this sample (obviously the two aren't mutually exclusive). The underside of the head has been carved in such a way that the chin juts out a little.

The shoulders are completely straight, and the arms have been carved so as to be a little separated from the torso, but running directly parallel to it. Each arm is bent slightly forward at the elbow, and each arm is slightly pointed at the end. The torso is thin and straight, and the legs are the same width on either side. The back is slightly convex. In between the legs has been carved a fairly large gap, which narrows towards the bottom of the legs. Similar to the arms, the legs are bent slightly at the knee, and each leg ends in a small foot, pointing forward. There is a hole in the bottom of the figure's right foot - was this used to attach it to something?

Notes: Smithsonian Collections report says that it's a man, but it's unclear how they concluded this. Lack of clear female anatomical features, so maybe that's why. Unclear why

the head and body are two separate pieces. I don't think they're meant to be detached, as it would be really hard to, so why hasn't it been carved from one piece?

Polish hotspots:

- Greatest degree of polish
 - On the back of the figurine, particularly the back of the head
 - Nose and point of chin
- Lesser degree
 - Brows
- Least degree
 - Front of body (smooth, not very polished at all).

Catalogue number: 193434.000

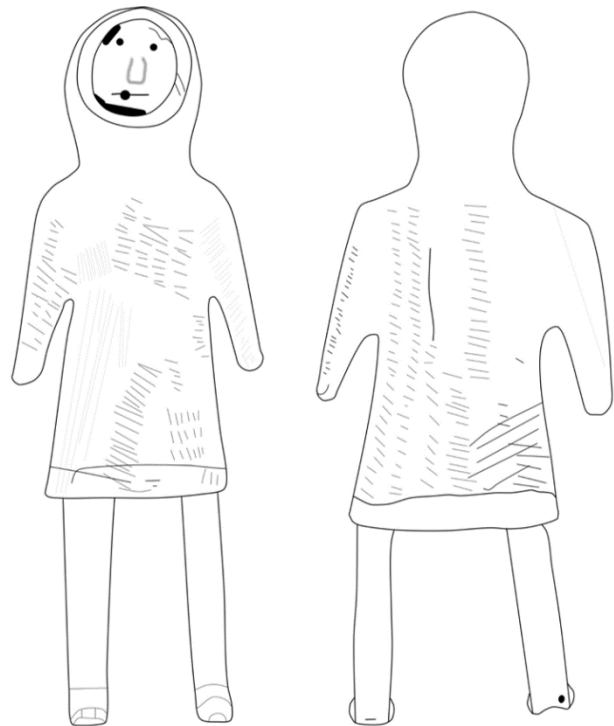
Object type: Sculpture/Carving/Figures

Object ID: Figure

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 6.69cm, head width 1.29cm, max width 2.54cm, max depth 1.16cm, weight 51.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of William M. Fitzhugh (1853-1929, a San Francisco collector); purchased by MAI from the estate of William M. Fitzhugh in 1936." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: A small ivory figurine. Unusually, this figurine has the clothes carved on. The head is covered by a hood, from which the face peeks out. The eyes are represented by two tiny dots, and the mouth by a small horizontal incision. All three have been filled with a black/brown substance to make them clearer. The nose has been carved out, but the brows and cheeks aren't particularly noticeable (unlike many of the other figurines). The hood of the coat peeks out just ahead of the face. Because of the hood, the neck is very thick and the

shoulders look very small. The shoulders slope down to small, comparatively short arms which point down. The torso widens out in the shape of a coat, and around the bottom is a fine incision, though this overlaps at the front (done in a hurry or by someone bored?). The incision does, in places, have a little bit of dark material in it, perhaps to make it clearer. From the bottom of the coat, two legs protrude, which are wide apart and completely straight. At the end of the legs are small feet which point forward.

Interestingly, the ivory surface on the front is much 'rougher' looking than on the back - was this a purposeful choice or just chance?

Polish hotspots:

This isn't a highly polished figure.

- Most polish can be seen on the very front surface of the feet, the side of the left arm, and the front of their left leg
- To a lesser extent, there is shine all over the back and head.

However overall this is a comparatively small amount. Interestingly, the left arm and left leg are much more polished than their counterparts on the right.

Point Hope

Catalogue number: 032518.000

Object type: Sculpture/Carving/Figures

Object ID: Figure

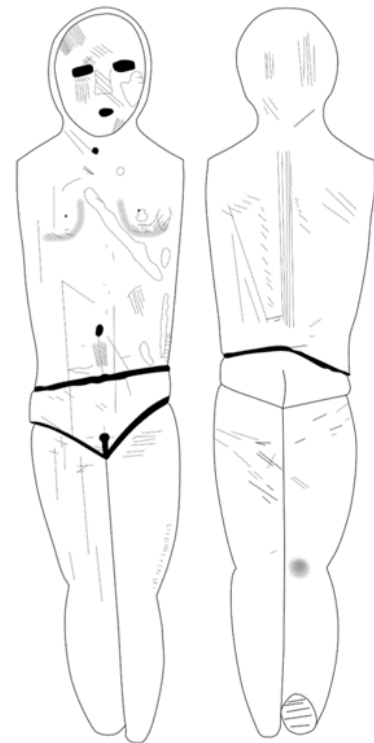
Material: Fossilised mastodon ivory

Dimensions: height 8.28cm, head width 1.18cm, shoulders width 1.79cm, hip/leg width 1.63cm, greatest depth 1.28cm, weight 63.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by George Heye from an unknown source circa 1912." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Dark brown figure in the shape of a human. Small round head, with eyes and mouth incised. Nose has been carved - is broad and very shallow. Looks like some damage to the nose? But there are a number of marks over the top - was this used after having been damaged? There is an incision around the face, as if the figure is wearing a mask. From the

head, figure slopes down to narrow shoulders and a straight torso. The figure has small breasts carved and a small circular incision has been cut/drilled for the navel. No arms (may originally have worn clothes). Around the genital area, a number of incisions have been carved, which make the figure look as if it is wearing underwear. Yet the vulva is clearly visible. The incisions seem too shallow for keeping clothes on, and the incisions above the legs surely wouldn't have been useful at all. Figure widens slightly at the legs, which are fairly long and without feet. The legs have been incised but stand straight and together, though there is a very slight gap between the two at the top of the legs. The upper and lower legs are clearly visible - some effort has gone into carving realistically proportioned legs. This appears to be a carving of a woman - on the chest, there are small breasts carved out, and the vulva is clearly carved. The width of the figurine also widens at the hips and legs, and the legs are quite curved.



Notes: There are scratches all over the figurine – is this use or general wear and tear? Some patches of damage, too, but not nearly as extensive as the archaeological figures.

Polish hotspots:

- Greatest degree of polish
 - Breasts
 - Front and back of legs
 - Genital area
 - Back
 - Buttocks
- Lesser degree
 - Face
 - Stomach
 - Back of head.

No visible polish on the engraving. The engraving all the way around could be a hood, except the rest of the body is clearly naked. Unless it was meant to be clothed - but clothed figurines tend to be a lot simpler, with no need for the level of detail carved on this figurine.

Catalogue number: 191320.000

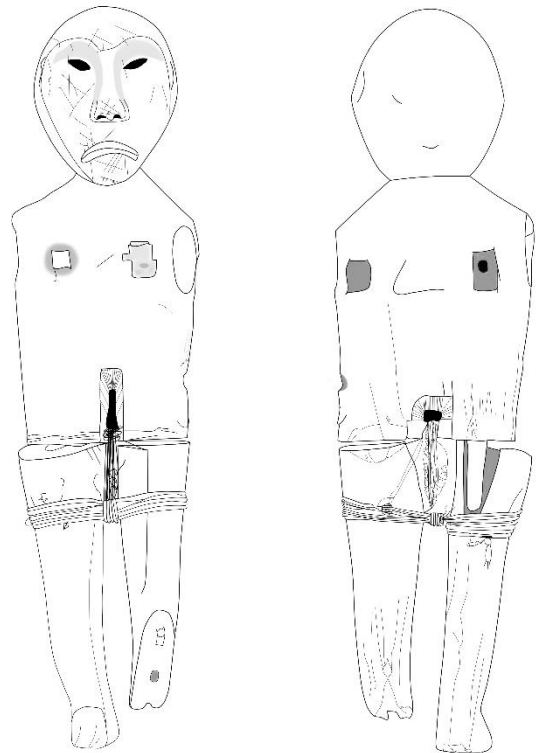
Object type: Ceremonial/ritual items: shamanic objects

Object ID: Figure

Material: Wood, sinew, paint

Dimensions: height 21.1cm, head width 4cm, shoulder width 4.8cm, weight 230.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of John Coulson Percy Skottowe (1894-1979, who worked periodically in Alaska in the late 1920s and early 1930s) and possibly collected by him; purchased by MAI from J.C.P. Skottowe in 1936." Purchased in November 1936. [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: A large brown wooden doll, likely for use by a shaman. The head is rounded at the top but slopes forward and becomes pointed at the chin. The face is painted red (with ochre?), but the nose, chin and cheeks don't show as much paint - it has likely rubbed off with use. The curves of the face have been carefully carved, and there are two rather deep horizontal grooves for eyes. The nose is broad and fairly flat, with two nostrils carved at the bottom. There is a groove under and around the nose, which seems to have been done intentionally as it is quite straight and goes against the grain of the wood. The mouth is wide, deep and slightly downturned, and at either end there are two grooves, likely done on purpose, which lead towards the bottom of the face. Both are slightly wider at the top - is it possible that labrets were here? Or do they represent tattoos? There are scratches all over the face, and some cross-hatching on the nose and chin - was this intentional?

There is no neck, and under the head the figure's shoulders slope down on either side. The torso is very straight and there are no arms, though there are two large holes on either side. There are also holes which at first seem like nipples, but were these for attaching something, perhaps arms, as the holes are carved all the way through to the other side of the figure. On the figure's left hand side, the arm-hole joins up with the tunnel made on the holes at the front and back, though on its right side this is not the case.

Towards the bottom of the torso, a rectangular piece of wood has been carved out at the front and back of the figurine. Through this, string made of sinew has been looped and knotted to join the legs to the rest of the figurine, and wooden dowels also connect the two. The legs themselves are darker than the rest of the figurine, having been coated with black paint, though much of this has now faded, leaving the wood look like it has been stained. The string wraps around the top of each leg and up between the two, connecting it with the rest of the body. The legs themselves are thick and slightly bent at the knees. Some of the back of the right leg at the top has been broken off, exposing one of the long wooden dowels. The right leg has a small foot at the bottom, but the left leg is slightly shorter and does not. There are the remains of two small wooden dowels at the bottom of the left leg, suggesting that something was attached to the left leg - the remainder of the leg, perhaps.

Polish hotspots:

As can be seen from the below, the polish hotspots were essentially anywhere that 'stuck out'.

- Nose, chin, cheeks
- Front of torso
- Front of legs
- Around the edges of the 'nipples' and arm-holes
- Back of the legs, towards the bottom
- Broadest part of back, between the holes, where it juts out a little
- Back of the head.

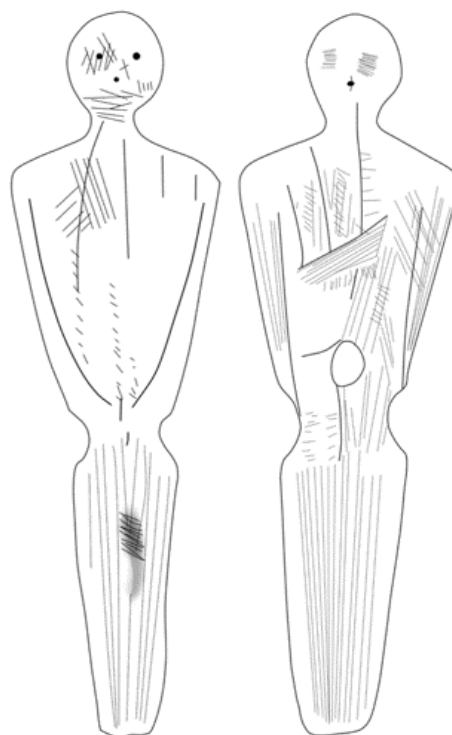
Catalogue number: 191329.000**Object type:** Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls**Object ID:** Doll

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: height 10.49cm, head width 1.31cm, shoulder width 2.83cm, weight 94.5g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of John Coulson Percy Skottowe (1894-1979, who worked periodically in Alaska in the late 1920s and early 1930s) and possibly collected by him; purchased by MAI from J. C. P. Skottowe in 1936." Purchased in November 1936. [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: A medium-sized ivory doll. It has a small, round head, with 3 tiny indentations to represent the eyes and nose. There is perhaps a horizontal incision where the mouth is, but this is quite difficult to see - it may simply be damage or wear. The face is very smooth - the contours of the face haven't been carved. The eyes, particularly the left eye, are surrounded by a multitude of scratches. There is a very short neck, which broadens out to wide shoulders, which are the widest part of the torso. The torso narrows towards the hips, and the arms are carved around the side of the torso, meeting in the middle. At the hips, the figure widens again at the thighs, before narrowing towards the bottom of the statue. There are no feet, and the legs are perhaps suggested by a slight dent in the middle, rather than clearly carved.



Interestingly, the back is very similar to the front. There are 2 patches on the face which appear to have been carved out - they look almost like eyes. There is a large patch which has been carved out on the back, and this may have been intentional, but it's not possible to definitively tell. The back is covered in scratches, particularly a number of long vertical ones down the middle of the legs.

Polish hotspots:

- Front of hands and face
- Back of torso (particularly the area that juts out a little).

Diomed Islands

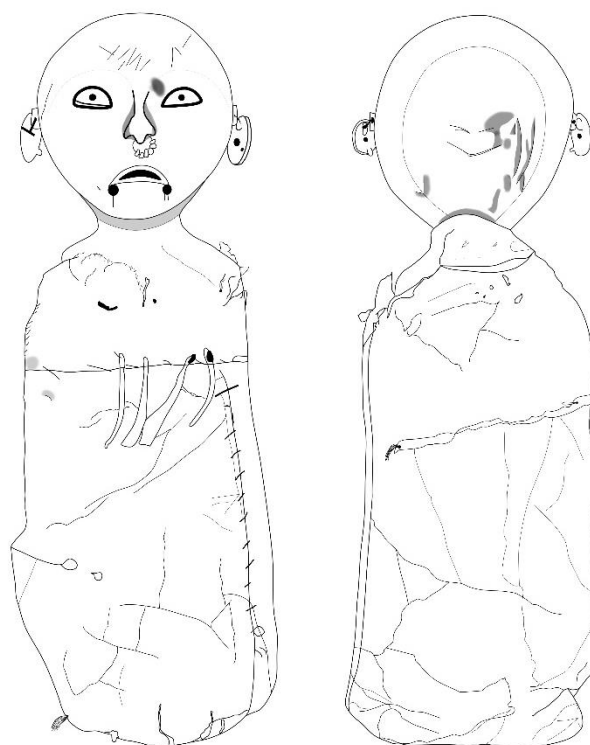
Catalogue number: 059835.000

Object type: Ceremonial/ritual items:
shamanic objects

Object ID: Figure

Material: Wood, ivory, cotton, sinew,
glass beads, brass, seal gut/intestines

Dimensions: height 21.2cm, head width
(including earrings) 7.6cm, head depth
4.45cm, shoulder width 7.38cm, bottom
of clothing width 8.74cm, greatest depth
4.63cm, weight 811.5g.



Provenance: Created 1800-1900. "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1917." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Large shaman's medicine doll. It has a large, round wooden head which has been carved to show the curve of the brow, cheeks and chin, and the shape of the nose. The eyes are both flat semi-oval shaped pieces of ivory with small holes in the middle, which have some sort of dark substance around them. At either side of the head are small rectangular pieces of metal with holes in the middle, from which circular ivory earrings hang. The earrings have engraved upon them a series of circles, and within the circles a number of circle-and-dot patterns. The nose has holes carved for nostrils, through which a septum piercing has been threaded. The piercing consists of 5 small green glass beads threaded on a piece of string. The mouth is also made from a piece of ivory which, similar to the eyes, has been attached to the front of the face. Looking closely at the mouth, it appears that the wood was carved to make space for the mouth. The mouth is slightly downturned, and under both corners of the mouth are small indentations which, it can be assumed, would have been inlaid to represent labrets.

Immediately under the head, the body is not visible, having been covered in clothing. Unlike some of the other dolls, it is not clear what sort of clothing is represented, though some little

pieces of material hang from the midriff, which could represent tools perhaps? The clothing seems to consist of a cotton cloth core surrounded by a seal gut outer, which has been sewn together with some sort of thread. It's not clear what the core is covering - it could be wood all the way down or could have filled with another material. The seal gut is creased and cracked, particularly at the bottom.

Notes: Lenz (2004, 161): "medicine doll". Lenz (2004, 96) - dressed in seal gut, which shamans themselves often wore while performing.

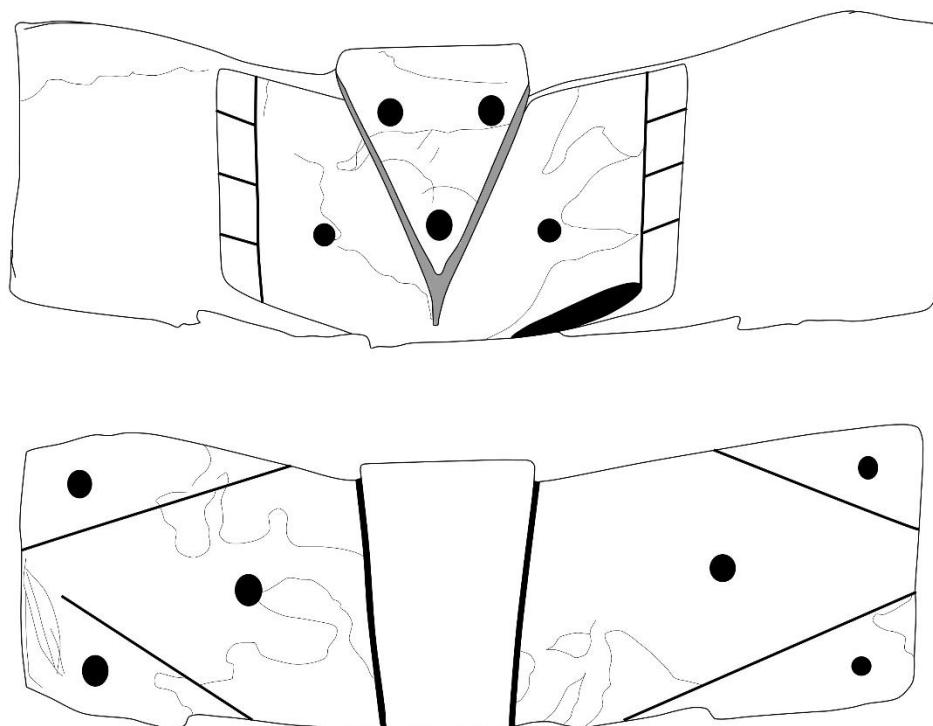
Polish hotspots:

- The brow and nose
- Back of the head is much lighter all over
- To a lesser extent, the cheeks and chin.

All of the ivory parts of this doll are highly polished.

Bering Strait

Catalogue number: 208926.000



Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 15.5cm x 5.2cm x 3.1cm, weight 222.7g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of Judge Nathan Bijur (1862-1930); inherited by his widow Lilly Prochownick Bijur (1867-1944) and son Harry Ash Bijur (1887-1972); purchased by MAI from Harry Bijur and his wife Madeline Bijur (1901-1982) in 1946." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Bone whaling charm, looks like a finished version 155962.000 but without all of the decoration. Quite damaged all over. Unsure what shape or form this is meant to be - looks almost like a butterfly. On the front and back are a number of fairly deep incised holes in a symmetrical pattern. On either side at the front, there are a number of notches denoting four vertical blocks. Behind this on either side jut out two flat rectangular surfaces. The ivory has been carved through from bottom to top in two places to make two tunnels - for the charm to be hung?

Polish hotspots:

- Extensive polish visible anywhere that isn't damaged
- On the front, on the right hand edge of the front piece, this is very polished.

Alaska (exact location unknown)

Catalogue number: 069811.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Male doll

Material: Wood, cotton cloth, ivory, glass bead, hide, paint, seal gut

Dimensions: larger doll 17.1 cm x 5.1 cm x 2.7cm, weight 28.8g; smaller doll 16.1cm x 5.1cm x 2.2cm, weight 24.5g.

Provenance: "Collected between 1894 and 1907 by Captain Dorr F. Tozier (1843-1926, associated with the U.S. Revenue Cutter



Service); Tozier's collection was purchased in 1909 by the Washington State Art Association (Seattle, Washington); when the Association defaulted on its payments for the collection in 1916, it became the property of the Seattle Land Improvement Company, owned by Fred E. Sander (1854-1921); in 1917, George Louis Berg (1868-1941, director of the Washington State Art Association) negotiated on Fred Sander's behalf to sell the collection, which was purchased that year by MAI using funds donated by MAI's Board of Trustees." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: 2 dolls with ivory heads and skin arms, covered with red beads.

Both look very similar, and are supposed to represent 'wolf-dancers', with the beads on the arms representing puffin beaks. Both have very small, almost rectangular heads, with lots of tiny incisions for facial hair. Both have small moustaches, and the eyes have also been engraved. The noses are small but noticeable. The hair, eyebrows, eyes, nostrils, moustache and mouth have all been made clearer by the inclusion of some sort of dark material. The heads are surrounded by hoods(?) which appear to be made of cotton cloth. Both dolls wear the same outfit - a kind of tunic top made out of brown cotton cloth, with a little frilled portion in the middle of the chest. The arms consist of wide pieces of hide onto which have been sewn lots of small red beads. The legs appear to be hard yet light (wood inner perhaps?) and are surrounded by more of the same material from which the tunic was made. The feet are made of the same piece of material as the legs, and are pointed at the ends. The feet are delineated from the rest of the legs by thread which has been wrapped around the ankles.

There is a fair amount of bright red dye on the knees and tunic of the bigger doll, and just a little on the tunic of the smaller doll.

Notes: The style feels very modern, and these are definitely not normal dolls, as the facial style is a lot different to the other dolls and figurines.

Polish hotspots:

- The faces are shiny but it's difficult to identify hotspots
- On the larger doll, the right cheek shows a little polish
- On the smaller doll, the nose, chin and forehead.

Yup'ik

Bristol Bay

Catalogue number: 050502.000

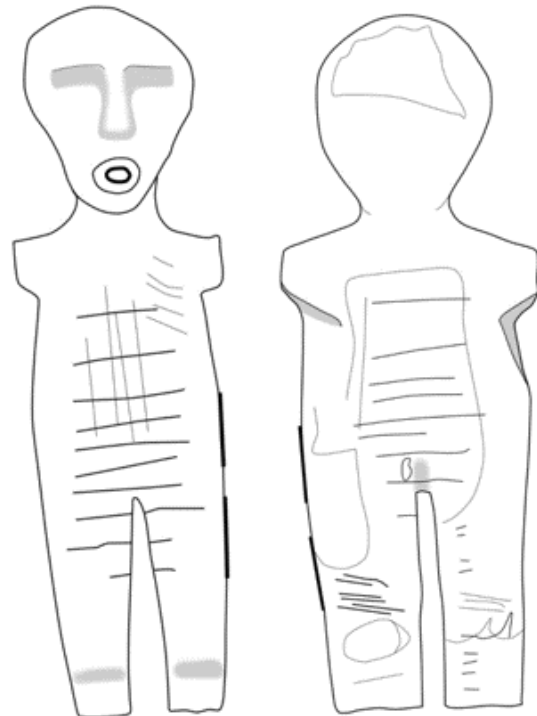
Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 5.6cm x 1.6cm x 1.2cm, weight 8.8g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from the Fred Harvey Company (Indian arts dealers in the Southwest) in 1916 using funds donated by Thea (Mrs. George) Heye." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: Small ivory doll. The head is rounded at the top but long overall, with a pointed chin. There are incisions for the eyes and the nose and cheeks are clearly carved. The mouth is rounded and open, perhaps with teeth or the tongue showing. There is a small neck, sloping slightly towards straight shoulders. There are stumps for the arms, but no actual arms. Under the arms there is a little groove to separate the arm stumps from the rest of the body. The torso is stout, with horizontal incisions leading across the body and across the thighs. The legs are straight at the front and slightly separated, with small knobs for feet pointing ahead. There appear to be 2 circular nails stuck in one side of the doll - what are these for? On the back, there is some damage to the back of the head, and some of the ivory is missing. There are more horizontal lines on the body, and the backs of the legs are carved at the knee to clearly show the top and bottom of the legs.

Polish hotspots:

- Back of legs
- Back of torso

- Back of head
- Cheeks
- Nose
- Front of feet.

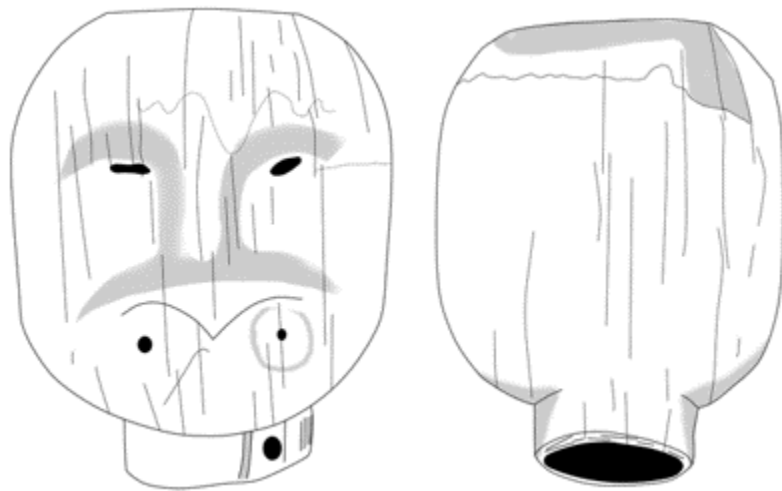
Catalogue number: 051202.000

Object type: Games, Toys,
Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll part/
fragment

Material: Walrus ivory

Dimensions: 8.5cm x
6.6cm x 4.3cm, weight
267.8g.



Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of and possibly collected by Lieutenant George T. Emmons (1852-1945, US Navy 1881-1899) at an unknown date; purchased by MAI from George T. Emmons in 1916 using funds donated by Thea Heye." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Doll's head of walrus ivory. The head is a rounded square shape, with the front and back sides quite flat. This is very heavy, and quite worn, and the whole surface is shiny, though not extremely polished. The facial features are unusual - the eyes are two small incisions, one horizontal and one slightly diagonal. Brows and a nose were carved in but are only very shallow. The mouth is particularly unusual, being V-shaped and curved on both sides. Underneath the mouth are two holes, likely representing labrets. Underneath the head is a small neck which is hollowed out, with a hole in the side, presumably for an attachment. However the hole and the inside are so covered with dirt that it is impossible to see any polish. The ivory is quite damaged and is covered in micro-cracks.

Polish hotspots:

Difficult to discern any - the whole head is shiny. However:

- Sides of the head

- Base of neck - around the edges in particular.

Kuskokwim River

Catalogue number: 016828.000

Object type: Games,
Toys, Gambling: Dolls

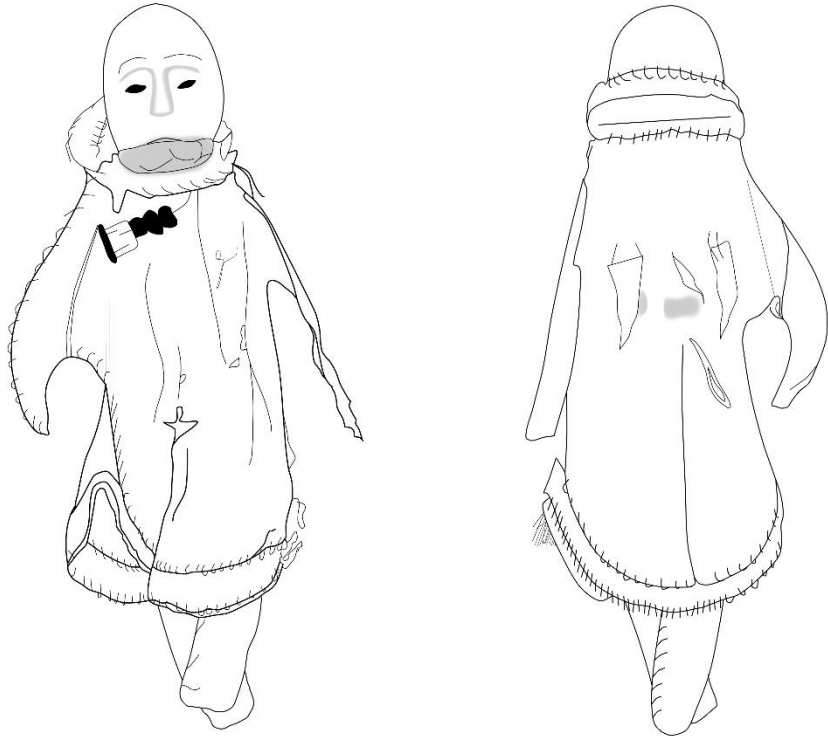
Object ID: Female doll

Material: Hide, ivory,
wool cloth, metal
thimble, glass beads

Dimensions: 12.1cm x
5.8cm x 3.2cm, weight
22g.

Provenance: "Collected
by George Byron Gordon
(1870-1927, associated

with the Free Museum of Science/University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania) in 1905 or 1907; acquired by George Heye in 1908 through an exchange with the Free Museum."
[From NMAI Collections report].



Description: A small, clothed, female, ivory doll. The head is small and oval, and is flat on the back. The facial features are shallow, with small eyebrows, small horizontal incisions for eyes and a small yet clear nose. There is some darkening around the brow and the eyebrows and eyes have been filled in with a dark material. The mouth is downturned and is almost completely obscured by the clothing, which also hides the rest of the ivory carving (if any). Originally the doll appears to have had a hood on their parka, but this has become flattened over time. From the hood at the front hangs a string of 3 beads, at the bottom of which there is a small thimble. The arms consist of two flat pieces of hide sewn together at the edges, and this piece of hide also forms the rest of the parka. This is clearly a female doll, due to the cut of the parka, which is rounded at the bottom and comes up on either side. The bottom of the parka is hemmed with a bright red thread. The parka overall is quite damaged: it has a

number of holes and is crumpled and hard. The legs are made of cotton cloth, sewn on either side with thread. The legs are short and point straight down, and there are no feet. On the back of the parka there are sewn two long triangular pieces of hide - unclear what these are.

Notes: Similarities to 016829.000.

Polish hotspots:

- Brow
- Nose.

Catalogue number: 147004.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Wood

Dimensions: 6.7cm x 2.2cm x 2.5cm, weight 9.1g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI from an unknown source in 1926." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Small wooden doll. The head is rounded, with a deep groove cut around the back of the head, likely for hair, a hood or a headdress. The head is quite damaged - there is a chunk of wood missing and some of the face has been glued back on. The facial features are very shallow and difficult to see, but eyes and the nose have definitely been carved. At the bottom of the head there is carved either a chin or mouth - it's hard to tell which. The doll has a thin neck, and broadens out to the shoulders. The top of the torso is the widest part of the doll, but narrows a few millimetres down - perhaps to be hung, or for clothes to be attached? There are no arms or legs on the doll.



Polish hotspots:

- Brow, eye and cheek area

- Top of head
- Back of head where ridges of wood are.

Mamterilleq

Catalogue number: 016829.000



Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Wooden doll

Material: Wood, sealskin, fur, squirrel skin, hide, glass beads, cotton cloth

Dimensions: left hand doll 18.5cm x 8cm x 6.2cm, weight 55.7g; middle doll 16.4cm x 7.9cm x 2.9cm, weight 33.6g; right hand doll 11.3cm x 7.5cm x 3.6cm, weight 28g.

Provenance: "Collected by George Byron Gordon (1870-1927, associated with the Free Museum of Science/University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania) in 1905 or 1907; acquired by George Heye in 1908 through an exchange with the Free Museum." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: 3 wooden dolls of differing sizes. The largest dolls are dressed in furs and skins, but the smallest doll is dressed in cotton clothing. The two largest dolls both have what appear to be small bags around the waist, both on the front and back of the body, and are wearing realistic-looking mukluks. The middle doll has a hood but this is pushed back from the head

and is flattened against the back of the head. There is black residue on the sides and top of the largest doll, and on the top of the middle doll. The face of the middle doll is also stained. The brows of all 3 dolls are broad, and the noses are carved quite shallow. All 3 have downturned mouths with vertical lines denoting chin tattoos.

The middle doll is definitely female, due to the cut of the clothing. From the top of her parka hangs a number of beads, with a tiny thimble at one end.

I am less sure about the larger one, as they have a downturned mouth (female?) and it is not possible to tell from the clothing style.

The smaller doll is likely a child/baby. The smaller doll's head is comparatively large and also very flat. Out of the three dolls this is the only one with eyebrows. The arms and legs appear to be made out of cotton, and end in stumps. It is difficult to see the legs because they have curled up under the clothing.

Notes: I wonder whether this is part of a family set? The middle one and smaller one may be a mother or female teenager and a child. The child has unusual clothes, though, and I have been unable to figure out why (and the literature does not provide any indication either).

Polish hotspots:

For largest doll

- No real polish hotspots
- Shine all over, but no clearly polished areas.

For middle doll

- Again, hard to tell. Shiny, but not very polished.

For smallest doll

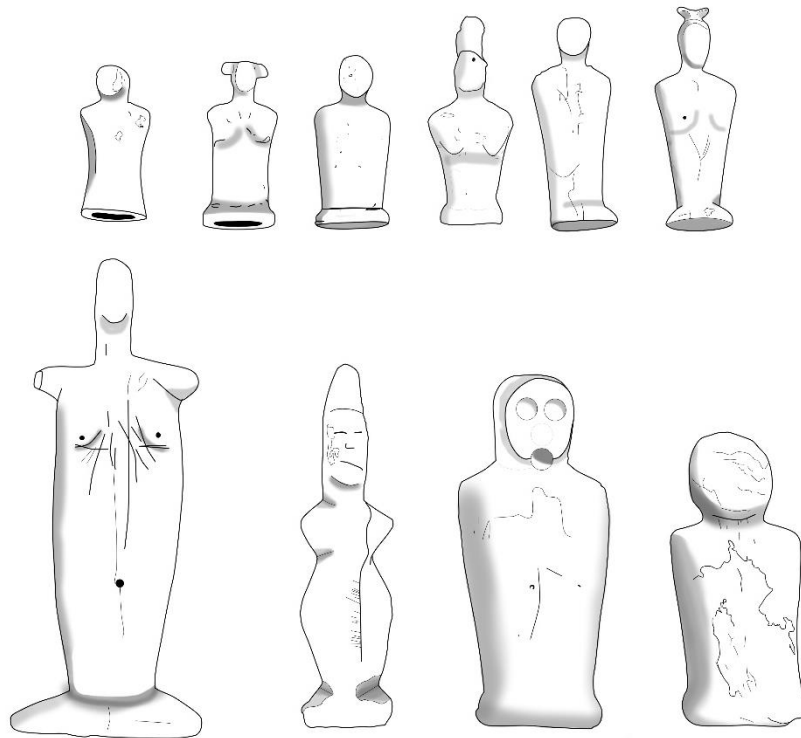
- Potentially more polish on the nose and brow but it's not too clear.

St Lawrence Island

Catalogue number: 124077.000

Object type: Sculpture/Carving/Figures

Object ID: Figure



Material: Ivory

Dimensions: A range of sizes - the largest is 7.9cm x 3.1cm x 2cm with a weight of 35.4g, and the smallest is 2.7cm x 1.2cm x 0.9cm with a weight of 2.7g.

Provenance: "Collected in 1923 by Arnold Liebes (1889-1957, a San Francisco furrier who did business in Alaska); purchased by MAI from Arnold Liebes in 1923." [From NMAI Collections report].

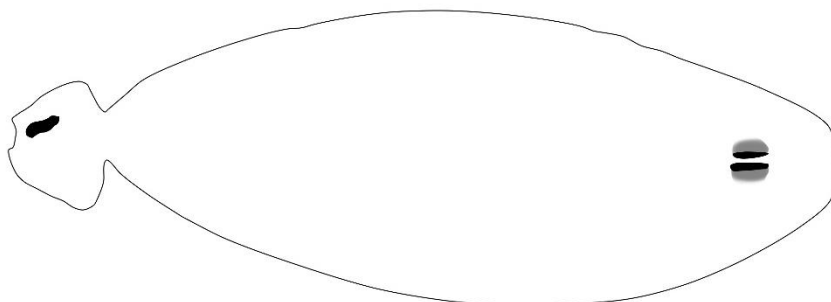
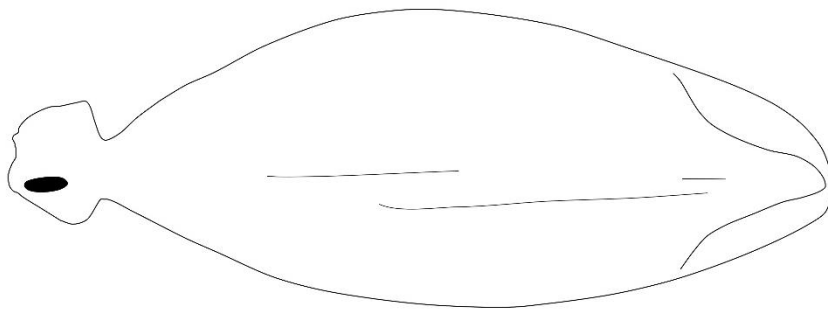
Description: A set of ivory carvings representing human figures. Not clear whether these are all part of the same set. These have been carved from different pieces of ivory - you can tell from the colour, the preservation and the quality of the ivory. The vast majority appear to represent women - they either have breasts or hairstyles representing women. All of them are of a very similar style, with some small variations in form. Most have oval-shaped heads, and quite a few have a shape suggesting a hood. Potentially 4 of the dolls have hairstyles - 2 have their hair up high behind the head, while two others appear to have their hair separated into 2 bunches, one on either side. All bar 2 do not have facial features - of those that do, one has fairly shallow horizontal incisions suggesting eyes and a diagonal incision for the mouth, while the other is extremely unusual in form, with 4 deep round holes representing the eyes, nose and mouth. None of the dolls have arms or legs - although the 'torso' is body length so perhaps they are wearing some kind of long dress or tunic (but this doesn't match traditional

dress, does it?). All of the dolls have wide flat bottoms, almost like small pedestals, which helps them to stand up.

Polish hotspots:

- a) Head damaged so can't see any polish there. Scratches between breasts. Purposeful? Not sure, as they're not symmetrical. End of left 'stump'. Back edge of her left hand side. Right breast.
- b) Notches carved out on either side to separate shoulders/arm stumps from rest of body. Front of torso. Either side of head. Her(?) left hand side of body.
- c) No polish - surface is fairly smooth and has shine but no real polish.
- d) Front side of torso - damaged edges are polished. Edges of shoulders.
- e) Most polished on - front of torso, around breasts. Lesser amount of polish on back of head.
- f) Not much, but some on front and back of torso.
- g) Hairstyle. Tip of back of hair. Front of torso. Tiny bit on face.
- h) Can see tiny file marks all over. All edges are a bit more polished.
- i) Breasts and hairstyle. Back. Back of head.
- j) Smallest. Sides of torso. To a lesser extent, the rest of the torso.

Catalogue number: 133460.000



Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 13.6cm x 4.7cm x 3.25cm, weight 186.3g.

Provenance: "Collected between 1897 and 1924 by Albert E. Thompson (ca. 1867-1943), who worked for the US government on St. Lawrence Island and in other parts of Alaska; purchased by MAI from Albert E. Thompson in 1924." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Bone hunting charm representing a whale. Thick, rounded body - ivory is quite damaged and cracked over most of the body. The back is flat and smooth, with the stomach very rounded. At one end, a small tail juts out, which has a small carved hole on one side. On the other end, an upturned mouth has been carved, and on top there has been carved a small loop within the body, presumably to help the carving hang.

Polish hotspots:

- Sides of the mouth
- Bottom of the tail.

Rest of body is shiny but not really all that polished.

Catalogue number: 188395.000

Object type: Hunting/fishing/warfare

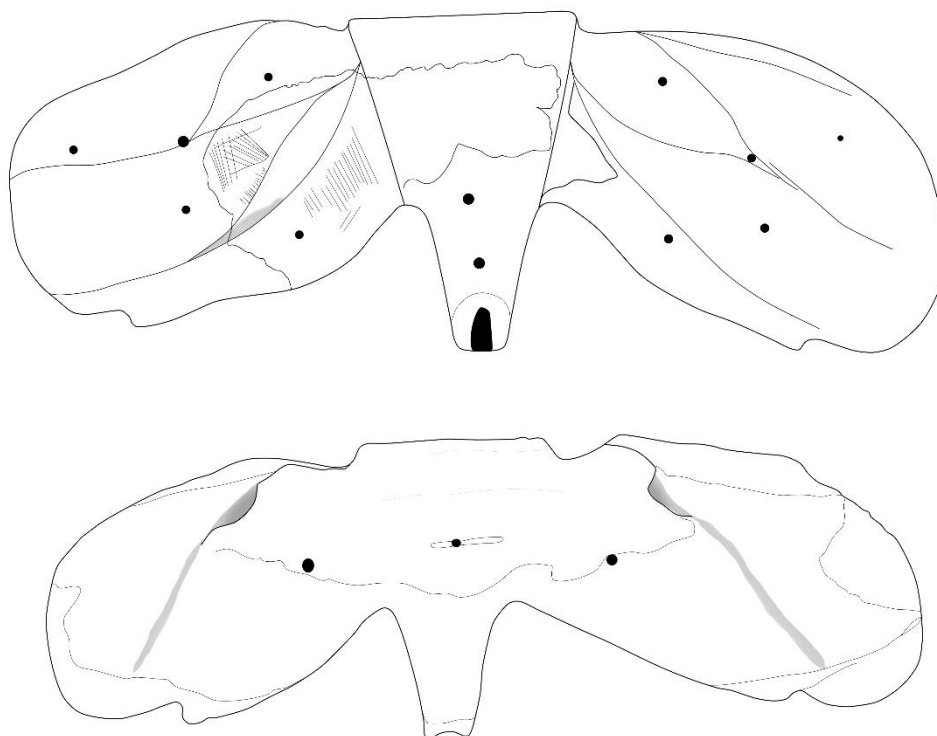
Object ID: Charm/amulet

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 17.9cm x 5.6cm x 2.6cm, weight 171.9g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; purchased by MAI in 1935 from Ye Olde Curiosity Shop (Seattle, Washington), which was owned and operated by James E. Standley (1854-1940)." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: Large, yellow ivory hunting charm shaped like a butterfly. Along the wings, there are a number of small, roughly symmetrical holes, and a number of long, winding, symmetrical lines have been incised along the front surface. On the body, there are another



two small holes down the middle. The front has a fair amount of damage and patina, but the undamaged surface is highly polished. On the back, there are two clear holes, one in the middle and one on the side, and there was perhaps one on the other side but it is difficult to tell due to the level of damage.

Polish hotspots:

- Wherever there is no damage
- Most of the back is heavily damaged, but the parts that are not, you can see polish - reasonable to assume that there would have been polish on the back originally.

The original archival documentation lists this as an 'ivory banner'.

Yukon Delta

Catalogue number: 051228.000

Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

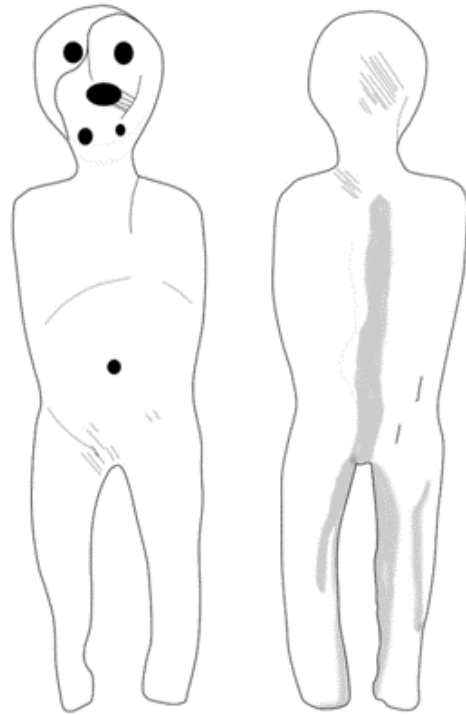
Object ID: Doll

Material: Walrus ivory

Dimensions: 10.7cm x 2.7cm x 1.4cm, weight 37.9g.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of and possibly collected by Lieutenant George T. Emmons (1852-1945, US Navy 1881-1899) at an unknown date; purchased by MAI from George T. Emmons in 1916 using funds donated by Thea Heye." [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: An ivory doll. The head is rounded, with a crack/incision around the head - it's hard to tell what this is. There are two holes for eyes, one for the nose, and two at the bottom (labrets?). The front of the face is damaged in places. This doll has quite a long neck compared to the others, and the neck slopes down towards the shoulders, which are quite rounded. The torso is an unusual shape - no arms are carved, but it is quite rounded, almost as if it has been left unfinished before the arms were carved in. A small dot denotes the navel. The doll is a little bow-legged, with the legs separate from one another. The legs are slightly bent at different angles, which make the doll look as if it is in mid-movement when viewed from the side.



Polish hotspots: None are very obvious, as the whole surface is shiny.

- Back of legs
- Back
- Chin
- Stomach.

Catalogue number: 073529.000

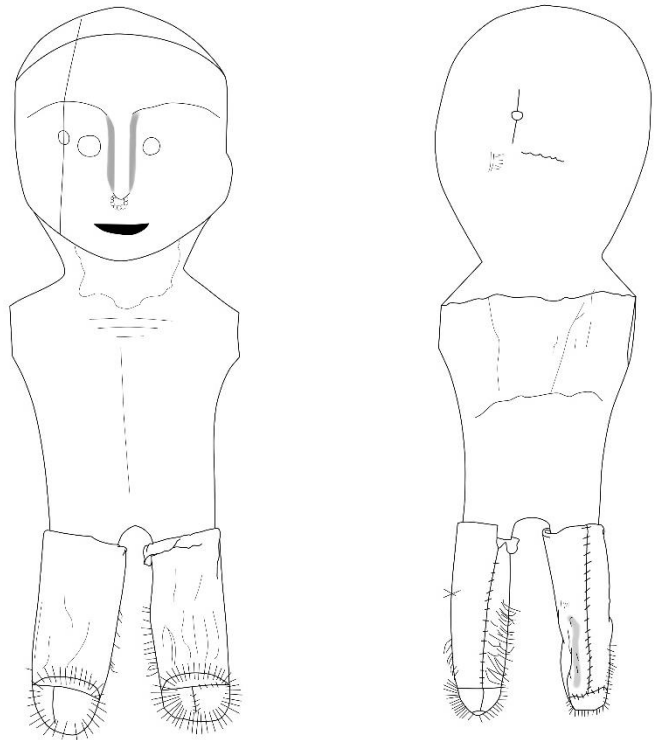
Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling: Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Wood, paint, glass beads, hide, fur

Dimensions: 41 cm x 13 cm x 9.5 cm, weight 1187.6g.

Provenance: “Collected between 1894 and 1907 by Captain Dorr F. Tozier (1843-1926, associated with the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service); Tozier's collection was purchased in 1909 by the Washington State Art Association (Seattle, Washington); when the Association defaulted on its payments for the collection in 1916, it became the property of the Seattle Land Improvement Company, owned by Fred E. Sander (1854-1921); in 1917, George Louis Berg (1868-1941, director of the Washington State Art Association)



negotiated on Fred Sander's behalf to sell the collection, which was purchased that year by MAI using funds donated by MAI's Board of Trustees.” [From NMAI Collections report].

Description: “Wooden doll painted black and red. Has glass eyes, string of beads in nose and skin leggings.”

Large dark wooden doll, painted black. The head is a rounded square shape, with a groove around the top of the head from one ear to another. The eyes are slightly irregular shapes made from flat pieces of pink glass. The nose is thin and long, and through the nostrils hangs a small ring of blue and yellow beads. The head tapers down to a neck, and under the chin and at the top of the chest the wood is reddish – this is probably paint, rather than the colour of the wood. There are no arms, just flat stumps where the arms would be. There are holes in the sides of the stumps, most likely where clothing or even skin arms would have been attached. The chest is broad and convex. At the bottom, the doll wears a pair of long fur and skin leggings which have been sewn together. The feet parts of the leggings are still covered in some fur, but the leggings themselves are largely free of fur. The leggings have hardened and are a little wrinkled in places.

Polish hotspots:

- Chin

- Front 'line' of torso
- Top of brow ridge
- Back of head
- Back of body.

Yukon River

Catalogue number: 023373.000

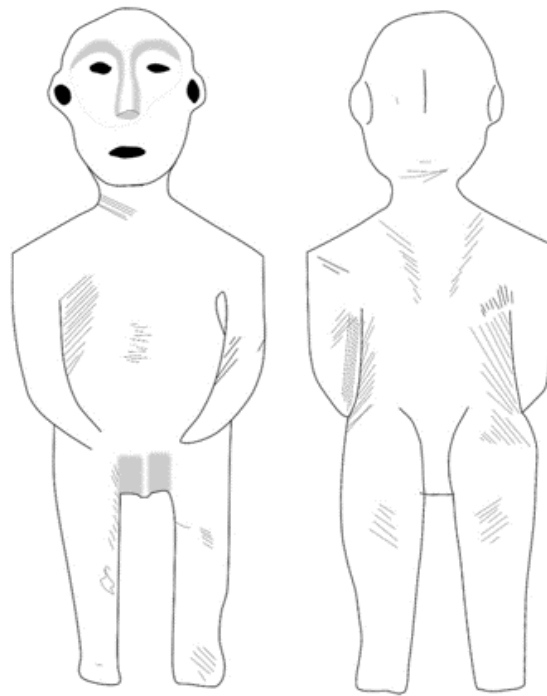
Object type: Games, Toys, Gambling:
Dolls

Object ID: Doll

Material: Ivory

Dimensions: 7cm x 2.8cm x 1.6cm.

Provenance: "Collection history unknown; formerly in the collection of Thomas Blaine Donaldson (1876-1947) and possibly his father Thomas Corwin Donaldson (1843-1898, an attorney and biographer of the artist George Catlin); purchased by George Heye from Thomas B. Donaldson in 1909." [From NMAI Collections report].



Description: Small ivory doll. Oval head bent slightly back, with horizontal incisions for the eyes and mouth. Ears stick out on both sides, and there is a tunnel all the way through the head from ear to ear. Underneath the head, the neck broadens out to the shoulders. Arms are carved, and these are placed to the sides of the torso, with the hands pointing towards the genital area. The genitals are, unusually, carved (more common to see female genitalia carved) - this is a male doll. The legs are short, straight and wide apart, with the bottom of the legs curved a little to show the feet. On the back, the buttocks are quite clearly carved out - again, is this unusual or a Yup'ik trend?

Polish hotspots:

- Stomach

- Knees
- Front of feet
- Brows
- Chin
- Top of nose
- Cheeks
- Back
- Back of legs
- Lesser - back of head.

Hole all the way through from ear to ear - can't see any polish as it's covered in dirt.

Appendix 3: List of Aurignacian figurines from the Swabian Jura

Details of all the figurines studied in Chapter 9 can be found on [Google Drive](#), and the full spreadsheet is also attached to this thesis.

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