

**Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center  
Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey**

**Oral History Project  
Interview Transcript**

**History Working Group:  
Fadi A. Bardawil  
Peter Redfield**

**Interviewed by Linda G. Arntzenius  
July 18, 2018**

This interview is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this text in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the Institute for Advanced Study. Please direct inquiries to the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center ([archives@ias.edu](mailto:archives@ias.edu)).

**Institute for Advanced Study  
The Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center**

**Oral History Project Release Form**

In exchange for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, I (the "Releasor") hereby irrevocably give, donate, assign, transfer and grant to the Institute for Advanced Study (the "Institute") all of my right, title and interest in and to all audio and/or video recordings of the oral history interviews in which I participated, together with all transcripts thereof (collectively, the "Materials"). My gift, donation, assignment, transfer and grant to the Institute includes: (i) title to the Materials, free and clear of all liens, encumbrances and interests of others; (ii) the right to all present and future copyrights, including but not limited to, the exclusive right to make, reproduce, publish (in print, on video and in all other formats) and to otherwise exploit the Materials, excerpts of the Materials and works derived from the Materials; and (iii) the right to use my name and likeness as required by the Institute in connection with its use of the Materials. For the avoidance of doubt, I hereby authorize the Institute to use the Materials (excerpts and derivative works) for any and all commercial, educational, research or other purposes.

Public access to the Materials is subject to the following conditions (please check one):

- None.
- Closed for 10 years from the date of the interview\*; full public access thereafter.
- Closed under other conditions as stated below\*; otherwise full public access:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*I understand that prior to the date of public access, access to the Materials may be given by the Institute to its staff and to others for the purposes of preserving and cataloguing the Materials.

I acknowledge and agree that this is the entire agreement between the Institute and me respecting the Materials and shall be binding upon my heirs, representatives and assigns. It may be modified only by a writing signed by all parties. This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Jersey and the federal and state courts situated in the State of New Jersey shall have exclusive jurisdictions over disputes between the Institute and me.

Witness:

L.G. Arntzenius

Name of Witness: LINDA

ARNTZENIUS

Peter Redfield  
Signature of Releasor

Name of Releasor: PETER REDFIELD

Date: 18 JULY 2018

**Institute for Advanced Study  
The Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center**

**Oral History Project Release Form**

In exchange for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, I (the "Releasor") hereby irrevocably give, donate, assign, transfer and grant to the Institute for Advanced Study (the "Institute") all of my right, title and interest in and to all audio and/or video recordings of the oral history interviews in which I participated, together with all transcripts thereof (collectively, the "Materials"). My gift, donation, assignment, transfer and grant to the Institute includes: (i) title to the Materials, free and clear of all liens, encumbrances and interests of others; (ii) the right to all present and future copyrights, including but not limited to, the exclusive right to make, reproduce, publish (in print, on video and in all other formats) and to otherwise exploit the Materials, excerpts of the Materials and works derived from the Materials; and (iii) the right to use my name and likeness as required by the Institute in connection with its use of the Materials. For the avoidance of doubt, I hereby authorize the Institute to use the Materials (excerpts and derivative works) for any and all commercial, educational, research or other purposes.

Public access to the Materials is subject to the following conditions (please check one):

- None.
- Closed for 10 years from the date of the interview\*; full public access thereafter.
- Closed under other conditions as stated below\*; otherwise full public access:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*I understand that prior to the date of public access, access to the Materials may be given by the Institute to its staff and to others for the purposes of preserving and cataloguing the Materials.

I acknowledge and agree that this is the entire agreement between the Institute and me respecting the Materials and shall be binding upon my heirs, representatives and assigns. It may be modified only by a writing signed by all parties. This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Jersey and the federal and state courts situated in the State of New Jersey shall have exclusive jurisdictions over disputes between the Institute and me.

Witness:

L. G. Arntzenius

Name of Witness:

LINDA  
ARNTZENIUS

Signature of Releasor

Name of Releasor:

Date:

[Signature]  
Feb 13, 2018

*Linda Arntzenius:* It is Wednesday, July the 18th, 2018, and I'm here at the Institute for Advanced Study with Fadi Abdo Bardawil<sup>1</sup> and Peter Redfield.<sup>2</sup> Both anthropologists, I'm interested to note. You were both here as members in 2016, 2017, and you're now back for this month of July to follow up with the History Working Group that was created during the time you were here. My understanding is it came as a sort of a grassroots movement from the Members, but that's what I want you to tell me about.

But before we get to the Institute and the History Working Group and the Town Hall meetings that took place, what I'd like to do is ask you very briefly in turn—starting with you, Fadi—to tell me a little bit about your personal background, where you grew up, what your parents did for a living, and how it was that you came to be an anthropologist, or a social scientist, if you prefer.

So, could I ask you that to begin with?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Sure. I grew up in Beirut, and my father was a chemist, an academic, who left academia, and ended up working in the private sector at one point. My mother had a managerial job. So, in one way or another, I am a child of an academic, even though he specialized in inorganic chemistry, so it's very far from anthropology.

My undergraduate degree is in biology with a sub-specialty in microbiology and infectious diseases from the American University of Beirut, which was a pre-med degree. At one point, during my undergraduate years, I began having doubts about going into medicine, but was set on finishing that degree, so I started exploring other routes, primarily through taking courses in sociology.

I was always very interested in social sciences and history, and part of the reason why I didn't want to go into medicine is that I thought it would not enable me to do as much reading as I wanted to do; because of the temporal regimen of med school and the life of a physician later on. After that, I did a master's in sociology at the American University of Beirut and wrote a thesis on the relationship of aesthetics and politics in the works of Ziad Rahbani, a Leftist iconic artist, during the Lebanese Civil War. I grew up during the Civil War.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fadi A. Bardawil, Member in the School of Social Science, 2016-2017; Visitor, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Redfield, Member in the School of Social Science, 2016-2017; Visitor, 2018.

And then I did the PhD at Columbia University in anthropology, because when I was looking at PhD programs in the States, I wasn't at all attracted by sociology in America, which seemed to me to be—I mean not all of it, but that's the perception I had at the time—to be very much interested in statistics and quantitative analysis, and I was more interested in qualitative, theoretical, and historical analysis.

So, anthropology seemed like a loose enough space for me to enable me to do the kinds of things I wanted to do, which always had a historical component.

In working towards my MA in Beirut, which focused on Ziad Rahbani, the Communist playwright and musician, I dug into the archives of his tapes, and the newspapers from the '70s onwards, and then supplemented that with some interviews with the producers, publishers, etc., that published Rahbani's work. So I ended up in anthropology at Columbia University and did my PhD over there.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Thank you. We'll come back to that. Peter, how about you? Again, where you grew up, what your parents did for a living, and how you came to anthropology.

*Peter Redfield:* Sure, I can give you a kind of self-myth of origin, if you'd like. As to where I grew up, it's a little bit complicated. My parents are both American citizens but I was born in Switzerland, and then we lived in Seattle, and then in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and then in California. And so, as much as I'm from somewhere in my mind, it's from California and northern California, and the United States. But that's really [from] middle school, high school.

As to why—my father's an engineer, a structural engineer, he has a degree in architecture and in civil engineering, and he designs mostly bridges. My mother, when we were young, focused on raising us, and then later, worked for a church, was a church secretary at the Episcopal Church.

My mother's a very strong, was a very strong and moral person, so one decision she made before I was born, actually, she threw the television out of the house – when she decided that TV was a bad influence. And so, we all read too many books, my brothers and I, when we were growing up. I have two older brothers, and [I] was the baby, the last chance for a girl. My oldest brother's a literature professor now at Brown. My middle brother is a professional geologist who works in Norway.

And so, the space, in a sense, that was left for me between siblings was the space of social science, so that might be why I went into it. Another element would be that when I arrived in California, and was trying to fit in, I had no television, and this is at the end of the 1970s, beginning of 1980s in the U.S., and it's very difficult as a youth, to navigate American culture if you don't have television.

So, I had to figure out how to fit in – it wasn't even so much the programs as it was the advertisements, or commercials, that's what kids talked about, made reference to. I had to figure all this out. And so, between that and reading lots of books, there was a kind of affinity, set of affinities, that I had, and I liked many different things. I liked science, I liked art, I started drawing cartoons when I was in high school, and my plan was to be a professional cartoonist when I went to college.

But when I arrived at Harvard, there was a category called anthropology. I didn't really know what it was. It started with an A, it was at the beginning of the course catalog, so I took a couple of classes. I had one professor I really liked, and he introduced it as a different kind of history; that's what spoke to me.

I've always been interested in thinking of, thinking *through*, history and have spent much of my career viewing things historically. I had a couple of post-docs in history of science settings, actually, uh, earlier in my career, and a lot of my work has – some of my work has – been historically reflected, though not all of it has.

I've always tried to think through time, but what I always liked about anthropology is [that] it was more flexible, it was unbounded, it was more theoretical, it allowed you more lee-way than a lot of traditional history did, so you could follow the story, you could follow threads as they crossed borders.

And what I came to be interested in were connections, post-colonial connections, colonial history, and global formations and for that, anthropology was a more inviting terrain.

*Linda Arntzenius:* How did you both come to the Institute? Fadi – how did you, and what did you know about the Institute before you came here last year?

*Fadi Bardawil:* What did I know about the Institute? A few things.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Okay. *[Laughter]* I'm trying to get to what brought you here?

*Fadi Bardawil:* I knew that it would be a year where you would be able to just focus on your work and be in conversation with other academics, and I needed that, because I was finishing a book.

I knew of the Institute for a while. I knew the Einstein<sup>3</sup> stuff, of course, but I knew who the [School of] Social Science faculty were, as well. I didn't know them personally, but I knew some of their work. And I knew who they were. So, that's why I applied.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Did you apply to anywhere else for that year? Or only to the Institute?

*Fadi Bardawil:* I don't think I applied anywhere else.<sup>4</sup>

*Linda Arntzenius:* Golly. *[Laughter]* How about you, Peter? What did you know of the Institute before you came here?

*Peter Redfield:* Likewise, I knew some of the history of it and associated it both with major figures like Einstein, and, in anthropology, Clifford Geertz,<sup>5</sup> who was a figure in the background of my training and trajectory. I knew Didier Fassin,<sup>6</sup> had met him before, and we had shared some common interests, so I was quite aware of some aspects of the Institute. And I had had another year away from campus in a setting that was modeled, in a sense, on this, so I was familiar with the form.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Where was that?

*Peter Redfield:* The School for Advanced Research [SAR] in Santa Fe, New Mexico. At the time that I went to SAR, I was also offered the National Humanities Center, which was right by UNC in Chapel Hill and that was the only other place I applied when I applied here, because it would be convenient and easy. But part of what's really wonderful about this place is the degree to which it does allow you to step outside of everyday routines of life. We had a wonderful, wonderful group that year, and I am forever thankful that I ended up where I did.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Fadi, did you finish your book when you were here?

---

<sup>3</sup> Albert Einstein (1879-1955), Professor in the Schools of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 1933-1946; Emeritus Professor, 1946-1955.

<sup>4</sup> In reviewing this transcript (Dec. 2018), Prof. Bardawil recalled that he had also applied for an internal fellowship at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, where he is currently teaching.

<sup>5</sup> Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), Professor in the School of Social Science, 1970-2000; Emeritus Professor, 2000-2006.

<sup>6</sup> Didier Fassin (1955- ), Professor in the School of Social Science, 2009- .

*Fadi Bardawil:* I did, yes, a first version and sent it off to the publisher. Yes, a few weeks after we left in the summer, in the beginning of fall. I finished the manuscript, yes. And, in part thanks to Joan Scott,<sup>7</sup> who generously mentioned she would read the whole manuscript.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Of your book?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* And did she?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes, she did.

*Linda Arntzenius:* That focused your attention greatly, I imagine.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Sort of, you know – I mean, having someone like Joan read the manuscript, and comment on it, was something that was very, very good to think with.

*Linda Arntzenius:* I'd imagine so.

*Fadi Bardawil:* So, I finished it, yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Excellent. And what was your project when you were here, Peter?

*Peter Redfield:* I was also working on a book project of sorts, part of it is a book, part of it is several things. I did not finish the book while I was here, though I did finish a collaborative issue of a journal with some other people, on the general topic that I was working on.

Essentially, I was looking at humanitarian design, little devices that are being created in the world to try and respond to large problems: low-tech, innovative things: water filtration, sanitation, medical devices. Not for themselves, although they are quite interesting stories, full of lots of interesting details, but what they represent about how we imagine the future, how we imagine society, what we think – would support a way of life in the future that we now foresee in front of us. The “we” being the people who are invested in these things, in creating them.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Right. Before we move on a little bit, can you tell me, was there anything that surprised you about the Institute when you got here?

---

<sup>7</sup> Joan Wallach Scott (1941- ), Member in the School of Social Science, 1978-1979; Professor, 1985-2014; Emeritus Professor, 2014- .



*Peter Redfield:* That's an interesting question. I had had friends who had been here, so there are many things that I knew. I think what surprised me in a way is that it was all true! If I can say that. You know when you've heard about something, or you read reviews about something before you actually see it or read it, sometimes it will spoil it, because your anticipation will be too high. If there's word of mouth [that] this is the most fantastic film ever, and so on and then you actually see it, and well, it's good, but it's not quite as good as you imagined it might be. Whereas, this [the Institute] actually, for me personally, did turn out to live up to its reputation, in small ways, as well as large ways.

*Linda Arntzenius:* How about you, Fadi? Was there anything that surprised you about the Institute?

*Fadi Bardawil:* I guess it's along the same lines. What you experience as a surprise is what everyone sort of tells you about the Institute beforehand, which is how much the place is designed to enable your own work and your own research; from housing to the cafeteria, to library services, to all these things. So, the Institute "bubble effect" that you had heard of, still manages to surprise when you experience it.

*Linda Arntzenius:* What do you mean by "bubble" effect?

*Fadi Bardawil:* The fact that it's a place which is withdrawn from the world – at least spatially it is – and in the sense that whatever you need, you get directly. You don't have to do anything for yourself. Your toaster breaks down. You write an e-mail. Half a minute later, you have a toaster in front of your door. You know, I mean, that doesn't happen –

*Linda Arntzenius:* – in the real world. *[Laughter]*

*Fadi Bardawil:* In the real world, right. I mean, these are marginal, minor things, but I think that they're important, because they get you to start thinking about questions such as what is the human infrastructure that's sustaining all of these things, right? So, for example, a few of us noticed that the staff doesn't eat with us at the cafeteria. And I think it's because it's probably expensive for them to do so. You know. Then you realize that that bubble effect, which is surprising, which is very much comfortable, is actually utilizing the labor of many people, and this labor sometimes, you know, does not integrate the life of the Institute, sometimes eating at the cafeteria, or something like that. That could be resolved very easily. For example, in France, people eat at cafeterias, and they have different prices for the meals depending on your payscale.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Really? This would be in some kind of –

*Fadi Bardawil:* In a university cafeteria. So, if you're a grad student, you pay less for the same meal than if you're a professor. If you're a professor, you subsidize, etc., etc.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Golly – and that's institutionalized?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Oh, yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* How interesting.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Great, well, tell Robbert [Dijkgraaf]! *[Laughter]*.

*Fadi Bardawil:* That was also interesting, the sense of how comfortable it is from the point of view of the Member but also of the whole infrastructure that's at work to make it so.

*Peter Redfield:* Maybe add one other thing that both complements that, and then, in a way shifts the focus slightly in thinking about the surprise. I was surprised by the degree of community that I found here, because I was envisioning a more monastic [environment]. I was here by myself and away from my life in Chapel Hill, and I was imagining I'd be only focused on my work, and it was a very collegial group of people who were assembled in our collective in the School of Social Science. And I think because of that, we spent a lot of time talking about things, and we spent a lot of time doing things with each other, we began to see things about the Institute, such as what Fadi was just mentioning. And we also began, uh, we were open, perhaps, to certain kinds of collective endeavors that we might not have been had we been a less cohesive group. Or had we not already had lots of discussions and –

*Linda Arntzenius:* You mean amongst yourselves in the member housing or here in seminars?

*Peter Redfield:* Amongst ourselves, everywhere.

*Fadi Bardawil:* You know, the Institute is experienced differently, depending on how you decide to establish your relationship with it. So, for example, if you live in New York and commute you have a very different experience than if you live here and have a car, or if you're say a European scholar who lives here and doesn't have a car and relies on the shuttle to go into town and shop.

If you have a car, and you need to get out for the weekend, you drive, and you go somewhere, you go to D.C., or you go wherever you want. If you live in New York, or you live in Philly, and you're here two, three times a week and you're here on a 9 to 5 schedule, let's say, because you have family in New York or something like that, then you don't get that sort of work/life fusion that we got. We both had cars, but we were both very much in residence the whole time. But we also know from our friends who didn't have cars here, that they were even more fixed. They had to rely on the shuttles and [shuttle schedules]. So there's different ways of experiencing the Institute depending on how mobile you are. And that ends up feeding into, you know, initiatives that we did, like the History Working Group, etc., because a lot of these conversations happened after hours.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Right. So, this is a good point to talk about the History Working Group and the Town Hall meetings, and the relationship between those two things.

Perhaps you could sort of lead me through the timeline. I've read the book that came out of the project referencing the President's Executive Order about immigration or the travel ban. Did that initiate or how did that play in? Either one of you, jump in.

*Peter Redfield:* I think we, we might even start before that with the presidential election. And the issue, some of the issues, that had been in the background. Because the election was, generally, if not universally, a surprise. Just as the outcome of it was not anticipated, widely, nationally, it was not also anticipated by everyone here [at the Institute]. And so then, there's a period of adjustment to the fact that there's been a campaign in which all kinds of political rhetoric has been used. Which pieces of it will be meaningful, which of them will be implemented as policy? And so, even before the announcement of the initial travel ban –

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes, I forgot that you were actually here before that, during the election and before Trump was elected.

*Peter Redfield:* When you have a political campaign, which is partly based on xenophobic rhetoric, to be direct about it, and lots of questions of race and immigration in the country in the background, as well—all of which we were partly discussing and thinking about in our seminars, and [for] some of us was a part of life experience, beyond the little bubble world. The election brought all this out into the open, and it made it very difficult for a little while after, to think

about these things abstractly without referencing the immediate political context. So I think it would be important to put that in.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Right. So, did you watch the election on television with colleagues at the Institute?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes.

*Peter Redfield:* Yes.

*Fadi Bardawil:* We did that and we watched the debates as well, even before the election. That brings me back to the point I mentioned earlier. If this place is designed as some kind of a secular cloister, where you retreat from the world in order to study the world, then, in times of crisis, when you feel that the world is sort of going in very different directions, you cannot basically inhabit this retreat, and say, "Okay, I'm working on my own work." Right? Then, your own position in the bubble becomes sort of like — the weight of the world becomes much more present, because you're so isolated.

So, for a lot of us, after the elections, there was a whole month, November and December, where people were out of focus. Literally out of focus. You're supposed to pretend as if nothing happened, and go to lunch, and talk about your book, and then go to the library, and then plug in eight hours of work. Instead, people were reading the news – for something like eight hours a day with ten tabs open on different websites.

So that brings up the kind of configuration where basically we started saying something along the lines—*all right, we're here, we have to do our work, but at the same time...*

Talal Asad,<sup>8</sup> the distinguished anthropologist, in his book *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* said a very simple sentence in the book's introduction. It's a sentence that captures a lot. As he was calling into question the premises of structural functionalism he said: anthropology does not only apprehend the world, the world in which it is located, but that world also determines how anthropology will apprehend it.

So, there is this kind of dialectic, dialogic relationship between the world and the people who study the world. You cannot just say, you know, I'm here studying the world, as the world itself is sort of unraveling.

---

<sup>8</sup> Talal Asad has made important theoretical contributions to postcolonialism, Christianity, Islam, and ritual studies. Editor, *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter*. Ithaca Press, 1973.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Put everything else on hold while you finish your book.

*Fadi Bardawil:* As Peter said, we were all here in September, so by that time, we had gotten to know each other, and friendships had already started to evolve. So there is that background of people who knew each other for three months, approximately, close to a full semester, and were thinking about these things.

*Peter Redfield:* And maybe the one other thing I would just throw in there is the feeling [that] with the election, it was not only a political sense of instability, but I think [for] me, speaking personally, a sense of *cultural* instability, in that there were strains of political rhetoric which seemed so clearly anti-intellectual and anti-science and anti-knowledge, and anti-, uh, everything that this place [the Institute] stood for beyond the particular studies that we were doing. The very basis of the notion that you would have an Institute for Advanced Study for *anything* seemed in question.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Would it then be true to say, in any way, that the President's directive was some kind of a catalyst for action among you?

*Peter Redfield:* Um – I think it –

*Linda Arntzenius:* I don't want to put words in your mouth, I just want to draw out the timeline here.

*Peter Redfield:* As best I remember, we'd been having discussions, and people would make statements about what they were going to do, you know, in the world, some kind of, uh, notion of what the mission might be. Because the thing which is also difficult, in a sense the flipside of the bubble, and some people expressed this, if you're, sheltered away from the world on a campus idyllic little pond and everything is peaceful and fine, it's really strange then to be reading 12 tabs of news from different places, all of which are disturbing to you in terms of events that are going on and occurring, and trends, and so on.

And so, I think it instilled in us a desire to get back to the world, figure out some way of re-attaching to everything that we were insulated from. And to some degree, yes, I would say – in my memory at least – that the travel ban was the catalyst that seemed – just as it provoked lots of things in response at that moment – I think in this setting, it was the piece that made it most obvious that the Institute clearly had something at stake in what was transpiring politically in this country.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Because of the international nature of its membership?

*Peter Redfield:* Because of the international nature of its membership and its history.

*Linda Arntzenius:* [Turning to Bardawil] Is that your recollection?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes, that's my recollection as well. And I remember a dinner where Tom Dodman<sup>9</sup> (that you haven't seen yet) sort of took the lead and said that we need to do something. I can't recall if Peter was at that dinner, but Pascal<sup>10</sup> was there, I was there.

And basically Tom said we have to start doing something because we've been thinking about stuff, and so he took the lead on pushing us to start doing something. [He] and Pascal were driving engines.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes. Are you all in the School of Social Science?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Tom [Dodman] is a historian.

*Linda Arntzenius:* And Klaus [Oschema]?<sup>11</sup>

*Fadi Bardawil:* Klaus is a historian.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So we've got two historians, three social scientists, and a mathematician, whom I've already spoken with.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes.

*Peter Redfield:* Tom, we should just say, socialized with us a lot, so in that sense, there were some lines of connection that were already present, which made it very easy to collaborate.

*Fadi Bardawil:* By socialized, we don't only mean after hours socializing, he also attended the Social Science Monday Seminars as well.

*Peter Redfield:* Yes.

*Fadi Bardawil:* He was in conversation with all of us social scientists and with Didier. You could safely say that he was an adopted member of the social sciences.

---

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Dodman, Member in the School of Historical Studies, 2016-2017; Visitor, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Pascal Marichalar, Visitor in the School of Social Science, 2016-2017.

<sup>11</sup> Klaus Oschema, Member in the School of Historical Studies, 2016-2017.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Right. So, does this bring us to the History Working Group, or does this bring us to the Town Hall meetings? And Robbert Dijkgraaf's<sup>12</sup> statement in response to the President's executive order? Again, what's the timeline there?

*Peter Redfield:* Uh –

*Fadi Bardawil:* You want me to pull my laptop out? Empirical questions. *[Laughter]* They were a few days apart. Why are you interested in these questions?

*Linda Arntzenius:* Well, I think my question is really, did the Town Hall meetings instigate Robbert's statement, or did the statement instigate the Town Hall meetings?

*Peter Redfield:* I'm not sure that it would be simply causal one direction or another, or the beginning of the History Working Group. My sense is that all these things were percolating at the same time. There was a desire, an unsatisfied desire, to do something, actually shared by many more people than the ones who came together to do this work—a general desire by many, many people to do something. There was the travel ban. There were all the actions in response to the travel ban. I don't remember when Robbert Dijkgraaf's statement was compared to when the Town Hall happened.

I remember quite distinctly the Town Hall and the popcorn machine, because that became a point of reference for us afterwards.

*[Laughter]* But I do remember the feeling and the sentiment in the room at the Town Hall meeting, which only reinforced a desire for there to be some kind of action.

And I think with all these, we could point to a number of moments of origin. I think there were many things that could have potentially happened, but the desire to do something took a particular course, in part because it was reinforced from multiple directions, such that it wasn't just the idea, we need to do something, and then it wasn't just, "Well, what can we do?"

We can do something that we have some half qualifications to do and speak from the place where we are. There was a combination of desire and opportunity and an opening that coincided, that led us to decide that we would devote some time to this.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Were there faculty at the Town Hall meetings?

---

<sup>12</sup> Robbert Dijkgraaf (1960- ), Member in the School of Natural Sciences, 1991-1992; Visitor, 2002; IAS Director and Leon Levy Professor, 2012- .

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes, as far as I remember. And in the Town Hall meeting, we proposed a few things, or in one of these meetings, that then got implemented, such as a film series made by directors from the countries that were basically subject to the ban. The political idea was very simple. This place has a lot of symbolic capital. It could mobilize its symbolic capital in an increasingly precarious present for the sake of scientists and non-scientists as well. So, we were brainstorming about ideas. And we had the Town Hall meeting, and the president's statement that he issued, you know, was one of them.

*Linda Arntzenius:* The Director's statement?

*Fadi Bardawil:* The Director, yes, Dijkgraaf.

And then, our work was partly an attempt to mobilize this sort of symbolic capital today, not because we think that we are in the '30s now but because there are certain political uses to uncovering this history in our present – a history of thinking about the free movement of scientists, a history of thinking about refugees in general.

So, it's not only a history of the Institute as an institution that welcomed refugees. It is that, but it's also a history of how quick the unraveling of scientific cultures is, which is what happened in Germany under the Nazis, which is what we wrote about in our piece.

The reason why the Institute could take these scholars in was because the Nazis had these edicts, and then, suddenly, you had people who were kicked out of their jobs. What we wanted to highlight were these two things: it was a story that underscored the positive role of the Institute in welcoming these refugees but also, how what takes years to build can be undone very quickly.

Which was also part of our present concern, seeing after Trump's election, a potential undoing of institutions. And that's what motivated us to do these things. And we were always wary, at least I was, of telling the story of eminent scientists. By which I mean that, a story of Einstein and other distinguished scientists could be framed by a utilitarian narrative—*of course we're going to get Einstein because he's a great scientist, so we benefit a lot.*

*Peter Redfield:* So, we make an exception.

*Fadi Bardawil:* So, we make an exception, we get the smart guys. So, we were aware that by marshaling this symbolic capital, we may be



understood as making an argument for the usefulness of getting quote/unquote “good migrants,” the useful migrants. And that's why we have a line in there about, migrants and refugees, whether they're scientists or fruit pickers.

Because what we wanted to actually make an intervention *against* is the fencing up of the world. And the impetus for that was an anti-nationalist impetus, and not an impetus of selecting migrants according to the good ones vs. the bad ones. There is a risk of it being read this way, because this is a place of high culture. Very much a place of high culture.

So, the people that they were receiving, like Einstein, Panofsky,<sup>13</sup> von Neumann,<sup>14</sup> they're all very distinguished refugees.

*Peter Redfield:* And European.

*Fadi Bardawil:* So part of the motivation was *we're here, what can we do*. We're here for a full year and we're part of this institution. What can we do as Members of this institution for a year, given that this institution and its history have a lot to say. Again, as I said, positively and negatively. Positively, because it got refugees, and negatively, because the people here were registering the undoing and unraveling of scientific culture in Germany under the Nazis. And also, to escape the fact that we did not want to reproduce this narrative about, good migrants vs. bad migrants. I mean, we need the Einsteins of the world type of narrative but that wasn't what we were after. The History Working Group, at least in my reading, is an outcome of that.

*Peter Redfield:* As you can tell, we had lots of discussions while doing this, and debates in the background of how precisely to proceed. Because obviously, if we were telling the story of the Institute, we would be telling the story of Einstein comes to America. There are advantages to that story, because it's a story which, at least until the very recent past, I thought, the moral framing of it was quite clear. If you grow up in the United States in our era, you know that Nazis are bad, and that helps frame this migration story, in terms of precisely good guys and bad guys, and in an implicit sort of way, though that consensus may be unraveling. It may no longer be as certain as I thought it was.

---

<sup>13</sup> Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968), Professor in the School of Historical Studies, 1935-1962; Emeritus Professor, 1962-1968.

<sup>14</sup> John von Neumann (1903-1957), Faculty in the School of Mathematics, 1933-1957.

But, as Fadi says, that runs the risk, that you constantly talk about the good war. You know, you tell about the story which you now have settled, which runs the risk that it will be separated from the current moment, where it's not so black and white, for many people, it's gray, uh, where it's much easier to mobilize people around a nationalist rhetoric, around the notion of fencing, around the notion of separation.

So, we had many, many conversations and discussions about what we were trying to do as we were doing it, in part because those discussions had predated, uh, actually, even the concept of having a History Working Group. Essentially, we were having a seminar all year in social science, and some presentations in history as well, that touched thematically on these issues.

And also, for the sake of, if you do want to try and establish the timeline of all these things, that empirical record, I would say, I remember we had some meetings in social science, or even before the official seminar session, we had some conversations with Didier as well, about what the faculty were discussing — what they might do in response to the travel ban. As well as the Town Hall meeting, there were other, smaller meetings, that were occurring more informally.

We had a meeting after the election in the School of Social Science to discuss the election — *what would social analysis look like at this moment moving forward?* So in terms of a kind of intellectual history of discussion, I think it would be important to recognize that these were not new conversations. I mean, I've heard Fadi's position on many things for some time, so this would not be a new belief that he would be coming to.

*Fadi Bardawil:* But, again to echo what Peter was saying, I think it is profitable to look at the long *durée* of this thing, and not to sort of constrain it to two moments: the Director's statement and the Town Hall meetings. That is what we're trying to get at. There is basically a history of conversations that were partly, as he [Redfield] said, incorporated within the seminar, and partly sort of outside of the space of the seminar. Again, what's good about this place is precisely how what happens inside the seminar continues outside the seminar. Because we're all living together.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, I'm getting the impression, the whole place [Institute] is buzzing with these conversations.

*Fadi Bardawil:* You can imagine, Trump is getting elected. So, basically, as you're reading theoretical texts – about prisons in America, for example,

and the law. How could you not make the connection between what you're reading about and what's happening in the world? So, there's that, again, that place. As you said, it's buzzing. And then these things start unfolding through different kinds of interactions, and through basically, this Member-led initiative that we sort of carried through, that resulted in [indicating the History Working Group publication, *A Refuge for Scholars*] – that's one outcome.

*Linda Arntzenius:* The book and the exhibition, too?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes. But also the conversations were also part of the outcome. Because we proposed things, as well, like the film series that they did this year.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Did any of what you were doing with the History Working Group— sorry, this is a vague question—but did any of that have an impact on the work that you came here to do?

*Peter Redfield:* Beyond delaying it, you mean? [*Laughter*] I would say not directly, beyond delaying it in a sense. I was interested in the history of this place, actually, when I first arrived. I went to the archives during the open house at the beginning of the year – they had a welcome weekend moment – and met Erica and chatted briefly with her, and looked at – there was a little exhibit set up, so I remembered this in the back of my head. And then I got some books from the library about the history of the Institute while I was here, because I thought, *Well, I should know a bit more about this place.* I'm curious about the history of institutions.

So, there's a sense in which it rekindled this in me — I have tenure so I wasn't under the same kind of pressure to finish a project while I was here that some people might be [under] — and it was a reminder that part of what this place has stood for is curiosity that also is not fenced; curiosity that won't be simply bounded by a project or by a pattern of what you've done before.

Obviously, you have your capacities and your degree of expertise. You have the things that you've built up, your little storehouse of knowledge. But it [the Institute] is also meant to open the horizon for you. And for me, this is a very small, slapdash effort. But it was a reminder that there are aspects of the history of science that I've always found interesting, the history of knowledge, of thinking through the social analysis of expertise and what it means at given points in time.

It reminded me I could be doing other things. And so, I did get a kind of intellectual reward from doing this project that I did not

necessarily anticipate when I started. And also the pleasure of doing collaborative work with people you like.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes, quite a few of you worked on this.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes. I would emphasize that, because, unlike in France, for example, where people work in teams, researchers in the social sciences in America, particularly the social sciences we do, say cultural anthropology, is mostly an individual enterprise. There are people who co-author things, but it's not four or five or six people who are writing together, reading together, discussing, and editing together, simultaneously. And also, signing together.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Signing together?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes, the articles that you have here [*A Refuge for Scholars*] are not signed by individual authors.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Oh, yes. I see what you mean.

*Fadi Bardawil:* This is very important, because the question of authorship is linked to the question of being a star – particularly in this American academic system. So, they are signed by the collective, as well. The relations of production of these materials themselves are trying to undo a particular way of focusing on just one individual who sort of discovers the great idea and then is writing the great op-ed, or so on. So, as Peter said, it was a collective.

*Peter Redfield:* Although, when Ian [Jauslin]<sup>15</sup> had us send a mathematical version of his article ["*Emmy Noether's Paradise*" in *A Refuge for Scholars*], also of the overview article, for publication [in an outside journal], we had to be identified as authors, because it was not possible in terms of the format of the journal, their software and everything, that you have a collective author, in the same way.

*Fadi Bardawil:* But we were not identified individually. We were all authors of every piece.

*Peter Redfield:* Yes, we were all authors of every piece. But we had to be identified [by our names], we could not have a collective name is what I mean.

*Fadi Bardawil:* No, but that's fine, if our names are there but there's not a single name — you don't know who wrote what and where. That's what I'm saying.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ian Jauslin, Member in the School of Mathematics, 2016-2018.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Peter Goddard,<sup>16</sup> what was his role in the History Working Group?

*Peter Redfield:* He was a strong supporter of the effort. Several people talked to him, had long conversations with him. He provided us with insights, as well as with forms of symbolic and institutional support, that might be the way to put it. What would you say, Fadi?

*Fadi Bardawil:* That's it, yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, he didn't come in and join the group and work with you?

*Fadi Bardawil:* No.

*Peter Redfield:* He didn't join us directly in that sense, but he was committed to the project on multiple levels, I think, and we had long conversations with him, several members of the group had long conversations with him.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, were you happy with the outcome?

*Peter Redfield:* I mean, in world history, no, but in –

*Linda Arntzenius:* [Laughter] Come on.

*Peter Redfield:* – terms of our desire, to have some effect in the world, as a small project, we were surprised by how—I mean, I'm struck that we're sitting here and you're interviewing us about this. I would never imagine that I'd be interviewed about my participation in this project and undertaking – I don't think that I've ever written any few paragraphs that have had more, multiple lives to the same extent that this little bit has.

*Linda Arntzenius:* What do you mean, multiple lives?

*Peter Redfield:* That it was in the newsletter that it became this [publication, *A Refuge for Scholars*], that it appeared for mathematicians, that there was an exhibit, you know. Bits and pieces were put on labels, under photographs, um – that's not my normal experience of contributing to any writing project.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes. How about you, Fadi? Were you happy with the outcome?

*Fadi Bardawil:* I guess so. I don't have anything to add to [what Peter said].

---

<sup>16</sup> Peter Goddard (1945- ), Member in the School of Natural Sciences, 1972-1974; Member in the School of Mathematics, 1988; IAS Director, 2004-2012; Professor in the School of Natural Sciences, 2012-2016; Emeritus Professor, 2016- .

*Linda Arntzenius:* At any point, did anyone say to you what's happening now is very unusual? Because the Institute usually takes itself seriously as [being] apart from politics, apart from the world, apart from all of those things going on. Did anyone ever say that? Or something like that?

*Peter Redfield:* I think the closest I could come to answering that would be—while there's a rhetoric about people being free to do whatever you want, and pursuing curiosity, that's been there from the outset, I think in practice, it doesn't happen all that often. And while there's encouragement that if you are interested in doing it, that you come together and collaborate on something, I also think that doesn't happen, except for people who already have established collaborations.

Sometimes people will come together, and they'll do a little project later on, because they then know each other by virtue of being here. But I think that it's relatively rare that Members come together and do something like this. At least, this is what we heard from the administration of the Institute as part of what they liked about our project, the product and the fact that it worked well at this particular moment for different people and from different vantage points.

But they saw it as being unusual. I mean, I'm trying to think of moments when people would use that language.

*Fadi Bardawil:* So, you said that the Institute takes itself seriously, and therefore –

*Linda Arntzenius:* I'm playing devil's advocate here – and wondering if anyone said to you that this was an unusual, the political nature of this effort was an unusual thing for the Institute for Advanced Study to be addressing?

*Fadi Bardawil:* No, but you know, to go back to this bubble thing –Right, so this bubble thing is true and not so true at the same time.

I mean, obviously, the Institute receives funding, for example, so it's entangled in the world on many levels. That's one register. Another register is that, the three members of the faculty of [the School of] Social Science that we interacted with, Michael Walzer,<sup>17</sup> Joan Scott, and Didier Fassin, are not only scholars, they are also prominent *public* intellectuals, which means that they intervene politically in debates in non-academic journals. *Le Monde*, *Dissent*, what have you.

So, if you forget about the question of the funding, you have the faculty of Social Science, who are deeply committed scholars, so they are *in* the world, they're not outside of it. Now, we were told once that as far as Members-led initiatives happen, this is one of the more political movements that happened since what was dubbed "the Crossroads uprising" in 1991, 1992.

Which I'm sure you know about. But what's interesting about the Crossroads uprising is, again, it gets us back to this bubble thing, because the Crossroads uprising was a Member-led initiative by Members in Social Science who asked to extend the Crossroads [Nursery School] hours into the afternoon, and to also have, I think, infants and toddlers admitted to Crossroads.

Now, this too is important, because it shows you that this secular cloister that presents itself as *thinking the world while being outside of it* has particular institutional conditions of possibility, and it was by nature, very gendered.

—So, it's interesting to think about these two dimensions. I mean, we were dealing with Trump, but the Crossroads uprising, was also dealing with the idea of the gendered nature of institutional arrangements, which is also very much a political topic for our present as well, the question of gender and science. So, yes, that's what we were told, in terms of Member-led initiatives that after the Crossroads uprisings –

*Linda Arntzenius:* Now, you have to forgive me laughing – because the two things seem to have a different weight, but when you look into it, like many things in Social Science, when you look from the very small detail – it expands out to larger – connections, so –

*Fadi Bardawil:* Absolutely. That's part of what we're doing right now, by the way.

*Linda Arntzenius:* What are you doing right now?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Peter and Pascal are working, and he will tell you about it, about the bomb, and Céline,<sup>18</sup> Thomas and I are working on a particular –

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, Peter [Redfield] and Pascal [Marichalar] are working on the bomb.

---

<sup>18</sup> Céline Bessière, Member in the School of Social Science, 2016-2017; Visitor, 2018.

*Peter Redfield:* IAS's involvement, especially with the hydrogen bomb. And speaking about being *apart from* the world, that's a moment where very clearly, IAS is *in* the world, in all kinds of [ways].

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes. I'll come back to that, but the other thing?

*Fadi Bardawil:* We're all working on things together but basically, now we're doing that and we are working on, what you could dub a history of the Institute from Crossroads. From the margins, which thinks through this question of gender and the autonomy of science, and the question of the conditions of possibility of knowledge production, and how that was gendered at a particular point as well, and how, again, what may seem like a minute, banal detail of someone saying, *I want one hour, one additional, two additional hours of nursery time for my kid*, is deeply entangled with the production of science.

*Linda Arntzenius:* And the responses that came from those who were pushing back against that are also very interesting because they epitomized that kind of stereotypical gender role.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Do you remember anything?

*Linda Arntzenius:* No, I wasn't here then. *[Laughter]* That was a long, long time ago.

*Fadi Bardawil:* But you wrote an article about it. On the 60th anniversary of Crossroads. You're part of our archive.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Did I? I don't remember that.

*Fadi Bardawil:* It's in *Town Times*.

*Linda Arntzenius:* *Town Topics*, all right. Okay.

*Fadi Bardawil:* You wrote it and you interviewed Danielle Otis, who was director –

*Linda Arntzenius:* Good lord, that's a long time ago.

*Peter Redfield:* So, we'll interview you next.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes. You don't remember this article?

*Linda Arntzenius:* I don't remember. You know, I worked for *Town Topics* for a long time, and I did many, many articles. I knew I'd written something on Crossroads, but uh –

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes. For its 60th anniversary. It was founded in '47, so that's 2007.



*Linda Arntzenius:* [Laughter] Yes. All right. Well, moving on. So tell me about your current projects. I know what you're doing, Fadi. And you're looking at? [Addressed to Peter]

*Peter Redfield:* Sure – I can say a bit more about that. There's one other thing which I wanted to mention in terms of the degree to which what we were doing had a certain kind of political valence but also perhaps political traction last year. I've been reading about the 1940s and the 1950s at the Institute and these are perilous times. These are not ordinary times.

And so, issues which might have been perceived to be transgressive in another moment, too transgressive, became more sayable, more thinkable, more part of a common set of concerns. As exemplified by the Town Hall meeting, perhaps, or the other moment that comes to mind for me, was the March for Science in Washington, D.C., where IAS sent a bus of people to go march for science.

I happened to be in D.C. at the time, so I went along too, and met up with some people. And how extraordinary it is, the notion that you would be having a public demonstration in the name of science. And I think that positions the Institute differently in a moment where that is the case, because how could it be opposed to that – if there's a March for Science, the Institute politically speaking, for all of its effort to separate itself from the world, it has to stand there, it has to be a part of it.

So, I think that made it perhaps less worrisome that we were doing this kind of thing than it might have been in another year, and it actually made it fit the interests of lots of people. There was a willing audience. The board of trustees were more of a willing audience than they might have been otherwise.

*Linda Arntzenius:* And how did you know that? Did you meet with the Board of Trustees?

*Peter Redfield:* We did, yes, we gave a presentation, both to the Member Alumni Group, AMIAS, there's a video of that, by the way. I forgot. I found it the other day – we're all equally embarrassed by it. And then, Tom actually, was the main person giving the presentation [to the board].

We'd wanted to get the exhibit done in time for the trustees' meeting, which we did do, with a lot of effort, a lot of dedicated effort by staff. Here, as well, is another thing to mention, how much support we were given. And doing this, in terms of thinking about

authorship, there was a lot of support that we received from many directions.

The newsletter was available, the exhibit was available before the board meeting, and it was all presented to the board. That was also something we were thinking about. These are very influential people, and at least to remind them what this place once stood for historically, whatever else. Maybe someone there, in the back of their heads, at some moment, in some place where they are being influential to the extent that anyone is at this point in time, that might have an effect. And also an effect for discussions about what the Institute is and its future.

But I can tell you if you want to pull back from that, I'll tell you just a little bit about the bomb.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Yes. Do you envisage that coming out as a publication?

*Peter Redfield:* Pascal and I have started drafting something which will then circulate, and so on. There is, of course, tons and tons of material that's already published, that's available. So it has in that sense been less of, strictly speaking, an archival project than one of culling strands and tying them together to figure out all of the different ways which the Institute and people who are central to the Institute, played a very major role in the history of, obviously some of them, both the atom bomb to begin with—when you have Einstein signing a letter from Szilard to Roosevelt — the background of the impetus to get the Manhattan Project started. Oppenheimer<sup>19</sup> running the Manhattan Project, and then coming here as director. We had not realized fully before reading through some of this, the extent to which Oppenheimer was playing a dual role for the first part while he was [Institute] Director. He was constantly going to D.C., as part of the Advisory Board to the Atomic Energy Commission.

Von Neumann and the initial, uh, computer initiative here were very much focused on thermonuclear research, among other things they were doing. Lewis L. Strauss, who's a very influential [Institute] board member, who becomes Oppenheimer's mortal opponent — eventually becomes chair of the Atomic Energy Commission.

And so, there's a way in which the Institute and Washington D.C. are very, very closely connected, when it comes to the period from 1947, essentially, to 1954, especially. And it's a moment where it's not so clear — that the line about useless knowledge, the useless

---

<sup>19</sup> J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), IAS Director, 1947-1966; Professor in the School of Natural Sciences, 1966-1967.

knowledge has suddenly become so useful — that it's not clear that the Institute would continue to be the Institute, or whether it would transform into essentially an applied, large applied —

*Linda Arntzenius:* You mean, with the computer?

*Peter Redfield:* With the computer, but also — that essentially, it could have become a bit more like Los Alamos, it could have become an arm of the US National Security project. We're exaggerating a little bit, but —

*Linda Arntzenius:* I'll look forward to seeing that when it comes out.

*Peter Redfield:* We had no idea, the extent to which the ties were so deep, and so long-lasting.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Interesting. It's probably too early for you both to comment, or to say, but what impact did your year at the Institute have on your career and your research?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Can we rephrase the question? I can't comment on my career. It's been a year only. But I can say a few words on how the way the Institute structures worked well with my processes of thinking. I'll elucidate.

As you know, the most important part of the day at the Institute is tea time, right? And I mean this very seriously, because basically what happened more than a few times with me during that time is that basically, you're in your own head and you've been working for the whole day, and then you stand up, and you go to get a coffee or a tea or something.

And then, you end up trying to explain to whoever you are talking to what is it that you've been trying to do. And in that moment when you are not *in* the material, you're away from it, in this literally structured social interaction (because it's there, everyone goes there, it's there from point A to point B) ends up generating a lot of ideas.

Because you know, you've been in your head, you've definitely been fermenting, and then you step out of your work, but you don't step out of your work alone, you meet other people that you've been in conversation with. And what starts off as sort of coffee chitchat is basically a very, very productive, intellectually productive encounter. Half an hour later you go back, and you're like, *Okay, that's exactly what I was trying to say here.*

There's something, anthropologically speaking, about ritual here, which is very beneficial at the Institute. That ritual had a good impact. Again, that's a marginal, sort of peripheral view on thinking at the Institute. But I think these things work. These rituals. You don't have any chores, so the only external structures you have are lunch and coffee. These are the structures around which you actually navigate. You're not teaching, you're not doing office hours, you're not doing faculty meetings, you're not doing service, and you "have to" quote/unquote go to them.

So, they end up, basically, having an impact on your thinking. It's the structured breaks that end up being very productive for work. I could say the same thing about conversations over lunch, as well.

These structured rituals were very productive for all our thinking in the past years, and towards the end of the year, you start realizing that. Yes, a lot of these ideas happen, you know, circling around the pond with a coffee in hand and a cookie or something like that.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Circling around?

*Fadi Bardawil:* The pond –

*Linda Arntzenius:* The pond. Going, wandering around the pond?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Yes. Or something like that, right?

*Linda Arntzenius:* Did you walk in the Institute woods? The famous activity for all.

*Fadi Bardawil:* I did, yes. But I ran more by the canal. I took the dirt road by the swimming pool to the canal, more than the woods.

*Linda Arntzenius:* How about you [to Peter]?

*Peter Redfield:* I went for a lot of walks, actually, yes.

*Linda Arntzenius:* And what did you do at the end of your time here? You went back to your home institutions?

*Fadi Bardawil:* Uh, yes.

*Peter Redfield:* Yes.

*Fadi Bardawil:* We're at the same institution. Yes. Went back to working for a living. Making our own tea.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, what stories do you like to tell about your time here? Because people will ask you, what's it like?

*Peter Redfield:* Mostly, uh, trying to express the sense – I think the ritual involved, because I just want to say I second everything that Fadi said about the lunchtime and the tea time. When the biggest decision of your day is what of many attractive options to have for lunch, that puts you in a different frame of mind. And maybe the biggest thing to say ritually about this place is [that] one of the classic definitions of ritual is time outside of time, that you are removed from the everyday, profane world and however problematic it may be, that's one of the classic definitions.

And there's something to that fiction that the Institute is outside of the world, that even while we are so much of what—I'm avoiding your question partly to go back to the project that we did—so much of it was about an effort to reconnect the Institute to the world.

At the same time, I would want to make it clear that we partly value the tremendous, wonderful privilege of being able to step outside of a world for a period of time, to think, in a setting where you don't have the array of everything of what we returned to when we left here — the kinds of interruptions, the kinds of necessities of engagement, which are present in our everyday jobs. There is something precious about this experience of being able to spend a bit of time that is differently ordered.

It does have ritual, it does have structure, and it has encounters, interactions, but they're different than ones you ordinarily get, and that does help liberate your thinking, at least for me. That's been tremendously beneficial. So, that's what I try to convey to people. We usually get lost once I try to explain [that] there is this wonderful food that's available for lunch, and that sidetracks anything else that I'm going to say. But it's that sense of possibility that I try to convey when talking about this place.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, tell me, what is this [that's happening] now? You've been brought together for this month of July with new Members who are coming in to pick up the baton, regarding the History Working Group? Is that correct?

*Peter Redfield:* There are some people who are here this year, this past year, who've been working on the project, so we met them. We've had lunch together, but we haven't really, it's not like we've joined one unit in a sense. Partly, because we were working on different projects. Ian is the only person whose – because he was here both years –

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, he bridges the two groups?

*Peter Redfield:* Bridges the two groups fully, in a sense, otherwise, we've just met some people in the last couple of weeks. For us, this is partly a reunion, and a chance to return to this project, and move it forward with a couple of topics. We just started with some vague ideas. We had a list of vague ideas—doing something with the bomb and doing something with gender, we were not quite sure what it would be.

*Linda Arntzenius:* So, you see this as something that will be ongoing, that you will do in your summer time or in your off time? Or how do you think this is going to continue?

*Peter Redfield:* I'm not sure where exactly – I doubt that all of us would keep doing this all the time in exactly the same way, and I think also, new people have come, and they may do some different things. We were hoping that it would encourage other people to think about the place where they were while they were there.

And think about the question of how being away from the world, connects with being in the world. And so, we would hope to foster a continuation. I have to say that before we arrived here, we hadn't really planned that carefully, what we were going to do. I've found it more engaging than I expected to return to this, partly because the characters I've been reading about and the period I've been reading about is quite fascinating. And in a strange way, therapeutic to realize that whatever's happening at present, the U.S. has been through an awful lot of very difficult times in the past.

*Linda Arntzenius:* How about you, Fadi? Do you think this is something that you will continue to do?

*Fadi Bardawil:* I really don't know. This project started as one of the ideas that we threw around to mobilize after the election of Trump and the Muslim ban. So, what I'm trying to say is that what motivated the idea was that we need[ed] to do something, and looking at the history of the Institute, at this particular conjuncture, it was a public intervention that was worth doing.

So, there is tension here between our own sort of intellectual curiosity about the history of the place, but also, the fact that the History Working Group, at least speaking for myself, is not doing the Institute's history for the Institute history's sake. The Institute's history is strategically mobilized to address what's happening in the world. It's another way of addressing your question by saying that,

yes, it could continue, but we need to think about how it would continue, and depending on how the world unravels as well.

Because as Peter said, there's the question of refugees and sanctuary that this place stood for. But in a world of alternative facts, the idea of producing truth becomes itself a very political endeavor. As Peter was telling you. The Institute is in the middle of the political present on many different fronts.

On the front of basically producing truth, on the front of [being] a place of sanctuary for refugees, on the front of the autonomy of knowledge, which is not only threatened by Trump, but also by corporate interests that seek to basically make science more and more applied.

So, what you have are very strong and multiple threats to the question of the production of autonomous science, whether it is from conspiracy theorists, who are producing alternative facts that they're circulating, or from corporate interests that want to produce a particular kind of research or algorithm that will help them sell whatever goods they want to peddle, or whether it's from nationalist chauvinists across the world.

So, that's the impetus. And what we're doing with these projects now is continuing this legacy of addressing burning political questions in the present, whether it's the question of autonomy of science and gender and science, or it's the question of, as Peter said, going back to a particular history, where the Institute was also deeply entangled in politics, via a different route. But it's also, again, to remind people who think that history is progressive and things were bad in the past, and we're always moving forward, and things are getting better, that, in fact, our recent history has a lot of things, but also, there are certain sort of patterns of exclusion and elimination, and discrimination, that are part and parcel of our present.

So, this sort of progressive narrative, doesn't really hold in our present. But also, that that freak-out, that this is a very exceptional moment in history, does not also hold. Like Peter said, it's therapeutic to go back to that moment, because you realize those people were going through a lot of hardships, and very serious ones.

So, you see, it's a balance between intellectual curiosity, and marshalling the archive for a public intervention. For me it is the sort of mix that keeps me attached to this project.

So, if these components are still there, maybe it can continue. We thought we could maybe produce a miniseries! *[Laughter]*

*Linda Arntzenius:* Well, I was going to say, this looks to me as if you're in for a long haul. *[Laughter]* So, anyway, I've come to the end of my questions, and I just want to ask if there's anything that you expected me to ask you that I haven't done, or if there's anything else you would like to say.

*Peter Redfield:* I never expected to be interviewed for this, so – *[Laughter]* – you've certainly exceeded all expectations, it's safe to say.

*Fadi Bardawil:* You know, both of us are anthropologists. So, you're actually reversing the roles here. We're the ones who show up, usually with a recorder in hand and put people in a corner and ask them questions.

*Linda Arntzenius:* Well thank you both very, very much.

*Peter Redfield:* Yes.

*Fadi Bardawil:* Thank you for your questions and for your interest.

*[End of Audio]*