

Experiments

Preparatory experiments

Location: Anywhere

Time: Any time

Participants: One person

[1. A new world](#)

This should be done first.

[2. The things](#)

[3. Listening to the ancestors](#)

[4. The gifts](#)

Group experiments

Up to date versions [here](#), from page 10 on

Location:

Kalasadama, Helsinki and remotely

Time:

17.-18.4., 15.-16.5., 19.-20.6., 10.-11.7.

Saturday 00:00-00:00 in Helsinki, Sunday 00:00-00:00 EET remotely (link)

Participants:

Saturday: anyone who can come to Helsinki

Sunday: Saturday's participants if they want, anyone else remotely

[1. The new world \(?\)](#)

[2. The others \(?\)](#)

[3. The things \(?\)](#)

[4. The camp \(?\)](#)

Preparatory experiments

1. A new world

Duration

- Preparation: Listening to the stories in the [Story library] + 1h max (reading/listening to the instructions)
- Experiment: 1h to 1 day
- Documentation: 30min

Themes

- Transitions
- Ritual
- Oral tradition and cultural memory
- “Lenses”
- Identity
- Rebooting

Preparation

- Listen to the Stories in the [Story library]. You don't need to do it just before starting, you can listen to the stories over time.
- For an introduction to hunter-gatherers, read [Introduction to Hunter-gatherers](#)
- Choose a time and a place. The place should be one where you won't come into contact with other people. It can be your home, a place outside or anything else.
- Leave behind everything you can, taking with you only minimal clothing and equipment. Mute your phone and put away anything else that might disrupt you.
- Read/listen to the following instructions.
- Put your phone or other recording device where you can find it and start recording.

Instructions (also in audio form)

You are about to enter the world of the Hunter-gatherers for the first time. This time, you will just try what it's like to enter it, what it's like there and how you exit it. By doing that, you will also start creating that world. Every time someone visits it, a little bit more of that world comes into being: everything you did there is a part of that world's history, and will shape its future. For it to be a shared world, you need to tell the others to come your part of its history. The world is a story, told by everyone who has been there, for the benefit of those who will live in it in the future. Some people will remember some parts of the story, some will remember others. All those voices and pieces of the story together are what the world is at that moment. It is always changing, some things will be forgotten and some added, and the stories are told from different

points of view that might seem incompatible with each other: that is because it is a living, and lived in, world. You will now also try what it's like to tell that story.

The world of the Hunter-gatherers is not a separate world. It's this one. The only difference is that you will see it through different eyes. You can compare it to looking through a tinted lens. When you put it on, some things become brighter and easier to notice, and some things will be harder to see. Or you can think of it as looking for certain things. When you are hungry, you see the things in the world that are food or can help you get something to eat. When you are driving, you look for the traffic signs, you follow the lanes, you observe the other cars - but someone who walks in the same place can be watching the sunset, looking for mushrooms, or imagining the history of that place, invisible to the eye, and not see those things at all. The Hunter-gatherers see the things that are meaningful to them, but might not pay attention to things that are obvious to us. As they look at the same world, they see something that looks like a different world: only in that sense it is a world of its own.

However, it's useful to be able to differentiate between those "worlds". To mark to yourself when you put on the lens, what is part of the story, and how *you* change. When you take on a different way to see, it not only changes the world, it changes you. You won't become something else, but your identity might shift a little. A new area of you might begin to grow. The person you are in the Hunter-gatherer world is in a way born as you now enter it for the first time. It is a bit like a reincarnation. Your previous life is still there, but give this new you freedom to be whatever it might become, even if it might surprise you. As a Hunter-gatherer, you are a child. Look at the world with curiosity. You have permission to be playful with it, try things and discard them. As you exit that world, the child has grown a little older, and if you return, you can pick up from where you left off.

To make these transitions, we borrow from what we know of hunter-gatherer cultures. They almost universally have a shamanistic world view. The world consists of different levels or worlds, our world being one of those levels. Spirits, forces, the dead, mythological creatures, ancestors might inhabit the other worlds. A soul or souls might come to us from another world as we are born and leave again as we die, or temporarily in sleep, sickness, or trance. A shaman can travel between the worlds through ritual to seek knowledge from the other side. Usually the shaman is thought to travel through an opening between the worlds. It can be the world tree, the different worlds being on different branches. It can be through a deep lake or spring, where the world of the dead is on the other side, upside down, a mirror image of ours. It can be through a hole in the ground that leads to the underground world. It can be as a bird that flies through the firmament. It can present itself in a dream or vision. To mark entering the world of the hunter-gatherers, find yourself a portal. It can be anything that makes sense to you that you can pass through.

Leave behind everything you can (maybe take a moment to clear your mind) and pass through the portal. You can perform a ritual of your choosing, say some words or make some gesture if you want.

You are in the new world, newborn. Spend some time there. What you know about this world is what you heard in the stories, but you might also see something no-one has seen before, or you might see something differently from the other people who have been here. If thoughts come that seem to belong in the old world, let them be and pass. Wait for some need to present itself. What do you want? What do you need? What impulses come? Follow those impulses. How can you fulfill your needs? What do you find? What can be done with what you find? What are you like? What can you do? Explore the world, what you can do with it, and yourself.

When you are ready to come back, pick up your phone or recording device and record the story of your visit. You don't have to tell everything, just the parts that seem meaningful to you. Give your story a name. Start by saying "This is the story of ..., told by ..." Don't use your own name - that is your name in the old world. You can give yourself a nickname (it can be changed later), or call yourself "whose shadow is (your first name)" (this is a convention in the Hunter-Gatherer world, you will learn more about it later).

You can tell the story in any way that seems meaningful to you. Keep in mind that you're telling the story to other people who will enter this same world later. You can give them advice or ask questions they might find answers to. This is like an oral map of the world, of the little bit of it you explored. It is also your introduction to those who will listen. You can tell things about yourself that you noticed - or not, and let your voice be your introduction. Don't worry about it being a well-thought-out, polished story. Thinking aloud is allowed, it can be the babblings of a child or vocalisations of someone trying to find their voice. These are the first stories, they can sound like it! End by saying "That was the story of ..., told by ...".

Exit the world again through the portal (ritual, gesture, spell...). Take a moment to return to your everyday self. It might be a good moment to observe what it feels like to be you.

Upload your recording to [Story library/The Stories of Births: how we came into the world and what we found there]. You can name it "story of ... by ..." or leave it to us. You can listen to other people's stories in [Story library/The Stories of Births].

If you want to share experiences from an outside point of view (in contrast to the story, which is told from within the world), ask questions, or otherwise interact with the organisers or other participants, you can do it [here](#). [Some kind of forum for it?]

If you choose to return to the new world, what you left is waiting for you there. Whether you do or not, it is a part of the story of the world for everyone. They will know you by your nickname or as "whose shadow is ...". Thank you for being part of creating the world!

You can now do any of the other experiments. Every time you do the same process of entering (you can change your portal or ritual), recording, and exiting.

2. The things

Duration

- Preparation: 1h max (reading/listening to the instructions)
- Experiment: on two days
 - 1st day along with your everyday life, starting from when you wake up and ending when you go to bed, or when you decide to stop
 - 2nd day ~1-3h
- Documentation: ~30min

Themes

- Objects and tools
- Needs

Preparation

- For the first day, choose a day when you won't be busy - a day off is probably best
- The second day should ideally be the next day, but it can be a few days later when you can still remember what you did the first day
- Pick a way to record things that can be easily done as you go about your life: you can record on your phone or make notes
- Put your recording or note-making device or notebook where you can find it when you wake up
- Read/listen to the following instructions

Instructions (also in audio form)

1st day

Make a list of all objects that you use during a day (or from morning until you decide to stop). It should include clothes, furniture, dishes - everything you touch. You don't need to include food or drinks (or medications, but you can also choose to). Try to make a note as soon as you use something. The list might get long!

2nd day

1. Look at your list and try to think of what you might use for that purpose if you were a hunter-gatherer (you can think of a specific environment or culture, read [Introduction to hunter-gatherers](#) for inspiration, or just imagine based on what you know or imagine about hunter-gatherers). For example:

- Bed → fir branches
- Bedsheet |
- Duvet | → pelts
- Duvet cover |

- Pillow → nothing
- Alarm clock → the sun

2. Pick an object or a few objects from your list that you think might be useful for the Hunter-gatherers. Try to explain to them, in a language they can understand, what they are and how they can be used. You can try to answer these questions: What is it made of? How was it made? Who made it? What do people think of it? What does it mean to them? How does it affect their lives? Does it have some significance besides its practical purpose? Where can you get one? Can you make one? Can it be dangerous or problematic? If you are interested, you can look into the object's history, how and where it was first used, how it has changed through time, what cultural importance it has had, or any other aspect of it.

Make a recording explaining the object from inside the Hunter-gatherer world. Enter the world through your chosen portal or method and record the story. Start with "This is the story of (object), told by (your nickname/"whose shadow is (your first name))" and end with "This is the story of (object), told by ...". When you talk about how it's used in our everyday world, say "the ancestors use it..." / "the ancestors think ..." etc.)

For example:

"This is the story of scissors, told by whose shadow is Aarni. The scissors are a sharp thing the ancestors use for cutting things. It has two edges, like two knives connected to each other, with loops at the end of the knife to put your finger through. They are connected in the middle. They are made of steel and plastic. ..."

Upload your recording(s) to [Story library/The Stories of Things]. You can name it "story of ... by ..." or leave it to us.

You can use your notes when you think of what to take with you into the Hunter-gatherers' world, or what the group might need there. They might provide you some insight into the objects our world consists of, how they shape our experience, what you might want to leave behind, and what needs you have on an everyday basis. We will further explore these themes in the experiment [The things](#) (19.-20.6.). You can take part in Helsinki on the first day or remotely the second day. You can upload your notes [here](#), if you want.

3. Listening to the ancestors

Duration

- Preparation: 1h max (reading/listening to the instructions)
- Experiment: ~1-3h
- Documentation: 30min

Themes

- The Hunter-gatherers' relationship to modern world
- Shamanistic world view
- Animism

Preparation

- Choose a place where there will be other people around but you won't need to interact with them (much) and they won't be disturbed by your presence
- You can take with you a recording device if you want
- Read/listen to the following instructions.

Instructions (also in audio form)

Go to your chosen place. Enter the Hunter-gatherer world through your chosen portal before you leave or choose a new one once you're there.

You are in the new world surrounded by the spirits of your ancestors. They live on a different level of this world, the ancestors' world. You don't know much about the ancestors yet, so be careful. It might be best if they don't notice you. You don't know if they are benevolent or malevolent, or how one should interact with the ancestors. But we need to learn, because we will live surrounded by them, and they know a lot of things that might be useful to us.

Observe the ancestors. Listen to them (you can record them if you want). Watch what they do.

You can try to answer these questions, for example:

- What are the ancestors like?
- What do they do?
- What is their world like? Listen to what they say, what can you learn about it from it?
- How do they see things? What do they see that you don't?
- What do they want?
- What is the task they are performing? Why do they do what they do?
- What do they value? What do they dislike?
- What do they think is good, or bad?
- What is their message to you?
- What do they know that might be useful?
- How should you act around them?
- What should you not do around them?
- What do they do that is hard to understand?
- What should we learn about them?
- How are they different from us?
- What do they feel? Are they kind, indifferent, angry?
- If they see you or interact with you, how do they react to you? How should you react to them?

When you are ready, go where you can record your story (you can exit the world and enter it again if you want). Tell the other inhabitants of the new world what you have learned about the ancestors or what questions you might have about them. Start with "This is the story of the

ancestors, told by (your nickname/"whose shadow is (your first name))" and end with "This is the story of the ancestors, told by ...".

Upload your recording to [Story library/The Stories of The Ancestors]. You can name it "story of ancestors by ..." or leave it to us. You can now listen to other people's stories of the ancestors there.

We will further explore our relationship with the ancestors in the experiment [The others](#) (15.-16.5.). You can take part in Helsinki on the first day or remotely the second day.

4. The gifts

Duration

- Preparation: can be done on different days (choosing equipment, looking for information, reading/listening to the instructions)
- Experiment: ~2h-as long as you like
- Documentation: 30min

Themes

- Needs
- Resources
- Hunting and gathering
- Gift society

Preparation

- You will be spending a longer time in the new world this time. Choose a period of time long enough for your immediate needs to present themselves: you might need water, food, warmth, shelter. You can decide to spend the night.
- Choose a place where you start. The idea is for it to be an environment where modern life is present, at least partially created by humans - so don't spend the whole time in the woods, but the area can include nature. It can also be an entirely urban environment. It should be a place where you can spend time without disturbing others, but it can be a place where you come into contact with people.
- Think of what you might need to take with you, but try to take as little as possible. Instead, take something that can be used to acquire what you need, or think of skills or information that might help you and study them.
- Make a list of the equipment you're taking with you or spread them on the floor and take a photo.
- Read/listen to the following instructions.

Instructions (also in audio form)

Go to your chosen place. Enter the Hunter-gatherer world through your chosen portal before you leave or choose a new one once you're there.

The goal is just to spend time there. Make yourself at home. You can wait for a need to present itself, or you can plan ahead. What do you do when you need to use a toilet? Where can you get water? How could you try to find food? Do you want to camp somewhere? What kind of a place will you create for yourself?

Think of the things you take from the world around you and put into it as gifts. Don't think first of what you can get, but of what you can put out there. The idea is that if you put a gesture of goodwill into the world, it creates a positive relationship between you and the environment (including the people in it, the "ancestors"). If you take something in return, it cancels out the relationship, so don't trade. Think that when you need something, the world might give it at the right moment. Look at your environment with this in mind. What gifts is the world / are the ancestors presenting to you? Of what use might they be to you? Should you take the gift, even if it seems useless to you at that moment, as a gesture of goodwill, or because there might be some yet unseen purpose for it? What is the world trying to tell you? Especially look at things people have discarded as gifts from the ancestor world.

Think of how you would live here if you settled here for the long run. What kind of resources could you look for with an eye to the future? Can you find trees that might bear fruit in the future, or places where certain materials might be found? Make a mental map of your territory. What are the meaningful places? Is there a route you find yourself walking?

When you have chosen to depart, or feel you want to, find a place to make your recording (you can exit the world and enter it again if you want). Tell the other inhabitants of the new world what you have learned and make notes for yourself for when you might return. Start with "This is the story of (name you want to give your place), told by (your nickname/"whose shadow is (your first name))" and end with "This is the story of ..., told by ...".

Once you have exited the world, take the list of the things you took with you, and mark which ones you used and which you didn't. Make a list of the things you found and what you used them for, and what you didn't have but would have needed (it might be easiest to spread your things on the floor in groups and take a photo). You can also make additional notes: Did a particular object become important to you? Does some object have some value beyond its practical use?

Upload your recording to [Story library/The Stories of Places]. You can name it "story of by ..." or leave it to us. You can now listen to other people's stories of their adventures there.

You can upload your notes/photos [here](#). They can be used to plan what the Hunter-gatherers might need in the future, and where they might find what they need, or what skills might be useful for them. We will further these themes in the experiment [The things](#) (19.-20.6.). You can take part in Helsinki on the first day or remotely the second day.

Group experiments

Up to date versions [here](#), from page 10 on

1. The new world (?)

Schedule

17.-18.4.2021

Saturday 00:00-00:00 in Helsinki, Sunday 00:00-00:00 EET remotely (link)

Possible themes

- Who are hunter-gatherers?
- Who are we as hunter-gatherers?
- What is the world of the hunter-gatherers like, what is it like to be there?
- Scouting the locations, creating relationships to the area, finding significant places and trails
- Oral tradition and cultural memory

Preparation

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Experiment

Saturday

- Gathering at meeting point (camp location?)
- Briefing
- Entering the Hunter-gatherer world
- Exploring locations
- Walking the trail?
-
- Documentation: telling the story
- Closing the world
- Debrief

Sunday

- Meeting via (Zoom?)
 - Briefing about the project
 - Introduction into the world and storytelling
 - Instructions for the experiment
- Experiment done individually
- Meeting via (Zoom?)
 - Documentation: telling the story (recording here or gathering recordings)

- Closing the world
- Debrief

2. The others (?)

Schedule

15.-16.5.2021

Saturday 00:00-00:00 in Helsinki, Sunday 00:00-00:00 EET remotely (link)

Possible themes

- Ancestors: relationship with the outside world
- Descendants: visions of the future
- The first times: original hunter-gatherers

Preparation

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Experiment

Saturday

Sunday

3. The things (?)

Schedule

19.-20.6.2021

Saturday 00:00-00:00 in Helsinki, Sunday 00:00-00:00 EET remotely (link)

Possible themes

- The material world: objects, tools, equipment, materials
- What to take with us from the old world and what the relationship with that is like
- Gifts and how things circulate, a world view without trade

Preparation

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Experiment

Saturday

Sunday

4. The camp (?)

Schedule

10.-11.7..2021

Saturday 00:00-00:00 in Helsinki, Sunday 00:00-00:00 EET remotely ([link](#))

Possible themes

- Band, group, family, society
- Routines, habits, traditions, time

Preparation

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Experiment

Saturday

Sunday