

INTRODUCTION



Inspiration for this introductory chapter struck me while I was browsing the homewares section of a department store in 2018. I was distractedly perusing the photo frame aisle, my eyes skimming the generically sentimental stock pictures of happy families smiling at the camera, pretty landscapes, cute pets and couples walking hand-in-hand, when I came across one that jumped out at me. Bearing the text ‘5 x 7 Made in Thailand’, it was a largely black-and-white image of five padlocks hanging from the cable of a probable bridge, the only splash of colour being a bright red love-heart adorning the one lock that faces the viewer. I recognised the image instantly as a photograph of love-locks: the padlocks that had been appearing en masse on bridges and other public structures on a global scale since the early 2000s. And, having been researching the custom known as love-locking for about five years at that point, it was with a peculiar sense of pride that I realised love-locks had accomplished the status of a stock image.

Stock images, such as those found in advertisements, on billboards and in brochures as well as in photo frames, are so called because they are kept ‘in stock’; there are whole catalogues of stock images, often compiled by private companies and sent out to advertising agencies, who select the appropriate images and pay a fee for their use. But they are also known as ‘stock images’, as Paul Frosh notes, because of ‘the predominant appearance of these images: instantly recognizable iconographic combinations which rely upon, and reinforce, “clichéd” visual motifs and stereotypes’.¹ Romance is one of the most popular themes of stock photography, and certain objects connote this theme, demarcating the genre of romantic imagery: red roses, wine glasses clinking, lit candles on a table, engagement or wedding rings.² Such objects are known as *semes*, as defined by semiotician Umberto Eco as an ‘iconic sign’ or ‘iconographic codes’, which bear particular cultural and emotive connotations.³ As is evident by its presence in a stock photo, the love-lock has become a *seme*: an instantly recognisable icon connoting romance.

The purpose of this monograph is to ask how this happened. How did the image of a padlock hanging from a bridge become an iconic sign of romance? How

did it become, to return to Frosh's words, a clichéd visual motif? Broadening the perspective, this book uses the love-lock as an exemplar in tracing how a custom and its associated symbolism can become so widespread, firmly established and instantly recognisable in a relatively short space of time. It begins by focusing on the padlock itself, historically contextualising an object that has clearly accrued significance beyond its original purpose.

The History of the Padlock

Vincent Eras, whose work *Locks and Keys throughout the Ages* has been invaluable for this chapter, defines the padlock as a 'detachable lock of which the swinging shackle passes through a hasp and staple or something similar'.⁴ Essentially, they are portable locks consisting of a body, a shackle typically in the shape of a U and a locking mechanism. The origins of the lock are unclear, but we know that they predated Christ – the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese used variations of them to lock vaults, doors and keep possessions secure.⁵ One example of a Roman padlock was 4cm long, made of iron plate and consisted of a metal chain instead of a shackle. The mechanism involved a horizontal metal bolt with a spring, which slid from side to side, opening and closing, with the turn of a key.⁶ In the ancient and medieval worlds, padlocks were used primarily for locking chests and securing doors, and remarkably few changes were made to their design and methods of construction between the Roman period and the seventeenth century.⁷

Throughout the Middle Ages, it was the Germans, French and Italians who gained reputations for producing the highest quality locks – in both security and artistic design, for the latter had become an important factor in their manufacture.⁸ By the eighteenth century, Britain was also boasting a prosperous lock-making industry, centred on Wolverhampton, and a number of key lock-makers were taking out patents for various designs: Robert Barron, Joseph Bramah, Cotterill and Jeremiah Chubb.⁹ In 1857, Linus Yale Jr., an American mechanical engineer, designed the first cylinder lock; taking inspiration from the peg system of ancient Egyptian wooden locks, he designed a pin tumbler mechanism that housed the key-operated mechanism within cylindrically shaped housing, inside the body of a lock.¹⁰

Today, the most common types of padlocks are pin tumbler locks – which require a key to release the shackle – and keyless combination locks, opened when a predetermined sequence of letters or numbers on rotating rings are brought into line. They are still used widely today, both domestically and commercially, and can be purchased on the high street (such as in Wilko and Argos), from DIY retailers and online. Prices on the website for B&Q, a British multinational home improvement retailer, range from £2.68 (roughly €3 or US\$3.40) for a 31mm

iron cylinder lock to £35 (€39 or US\$44) for a 67mm laminated steel closed-shackle lock.¹¹ Today they are used for a variety of reasons: to secure safe deposit boxes, shed doors, cupboards, luggage, gym lockers, even journals. And now, with the advent of love-locking, they are being attached to bridges and other public structures worldwide for no seemingly practical purpose. A history of the custom of love-locking is the focus of *Chapter One: Dating Love*, but a brief overview is useful here.

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, our knowledge of the history of love-locks is patchy, with various places worldwide claiming to have birthed the custom. What we do know is that in 2006 Italian writer Federico Moccia published a teenage romance novel entitled *Ho voglia di te (I Want You)*, in which two young lovers attach a padlock to a lamp post on the Ponte Milvio in Rome and then throw the key into the water below as a statement of their romantic commitment. (Henceforth in this book, padlocks treated in this fashion are referred to as love-locks.) Moccia's novel gained something of a cult following in Italy, and teenagers began to imitate the practice, first on the Ponte Milvio and then elsewhere. Tourists imitated the locals, and soon the custom had spread beyond Italy – and then beyond Europe, with people worldwide inscribing padlocks with their names, initials or messages and attaching them to bridges or other public structures before disposing of the key, in a custom which became dubbed love-locking. The 'tradition' dictates that if a couple wish to go their separate ways, they must retrieve the key from the water and unlock their love-lock.

It is not hyperbolic to claim that love-locking grew into a global custom. Through online research, word-of-mouth and research in the field, I have compiled data of over 500 locations worldwide where people have affixed love-locks to bridges or other public structures, such as railings, fences, gates and sculptures. This is no doubt only the tip of the iceberg, and a network of global researchers would be needed to document the full extent of this custom. However, if the sample of 500 is taken as relatively representative, love-locking seems more prevalent in Europe (granted, this may have more to do with unintentional bias in my research – see below), featuring particularly heavily in Germany, the UK and Italy. The structures can be well-known and in large cities: the Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne; Tower Bridge in London; the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. They can also be obscure structures in places less known on a global scale, including small towns and rural areas: the railings of the observation deck in Durlach, Karlsruhe; a bridge at Foots Cray Meadows, Bexley; a lamp post in Susa.

Love-locking does feature throughout Europe though, from the Scandinavian countries to the Balkans. It is also popular in North America, particularly in the US, where it stretches from as far east as New York to as far west as Hawaii, with many in between. And large assemblages have grown in the Far East, with particularly well-known love-lock sites on the N Seoul Tower and in the Yellow Mountains in China. Australia is also quite well represented, with most of the

large cities and some more rural locations featuring assemblages, including several on fences along coastal walks and at lookout points.

The custom's dissemination has been less successful in Africa and the Middle East, although it has occurred in these areas, in such locations as a bridge in Cape Town, a viewpoint overlooking the Dead Sea in Jordan, a bridge in Basra and along a corniche in Jeddah. Overall, it has appeared in *at least* 65 countries worldwide, on every continent bar the Antarctica (and may well even be there). Love-locks have thus appeared in destinations as geographically distant and culturally diverse as Paris and Vanadzor, New York and Saravejo, and Melbourne and Minsk, also showing up in small towns and rural locations (Illustration 0.1.).

The Love-Lock and Terminology

Throughout this book, various archaeological and anthropological terms are applied to love-locks. Some brief explanations of these key terms are explained here. Firstly, the love-locker as 'depositor' and the love-lock as 'structured deposit'. The latter is an archaeological term coined by Richards and Thomas in their 1984 paper 'Ritual Activity and Structured Deposition in Later Neolithic Wessex', and it is a concept anchored within the archaeology of ritual – of which there will be further consideration in *Chapter Four: Locking Love*.¹² Richards and Thomas describe ritual as 'formalised repetitive actions which may be detected archaeologically through a highly structured mode of deposition'.¹³ By 'structured mode', they mean deposited in a way that suggests deliberate placement by the depositor. There is often some cultural or personal significance to objects deposited in such a way, whether prehistoric, historic or contemporary. Harris, writing of axes, animal remains and pottery fragments deposited at Neolithic Etton causewayed enclosure in Cambridgeshire, observed that 'The items deposited were undoubtedly metonymic and mnemonic in quality'.¹⁴ These two qualities will be examined in relation to the love-lock in future pages.

Also writing of prehistoric archaeology, Fontijn observes that some sites become 'multiple-deposition zones', whereby 'people *repeatedly visited specific zones in the land in order to carry out specific types of deposition*' (emphases in original).¹⁵ This description readily applies to love-lock sites. Rarely will you see only one or two love-locks; one becomes two, becomes ten, becomes hundreds, sometimes thousands – sometimes even millions, in the case of the Pont des Arts in Paris. Thus is the nature of accumulation, which archaeologist Clive Gamble describes as having a 'magnetic-like effect'.¹⁶ Deposits attract more deposits, often at an exponential rate. The love-locks cluster and overlap, reaching such high densities that space becomes limited and people begin attaching their love-locks to the shackles of other love-locks (Illustration 0.2.).

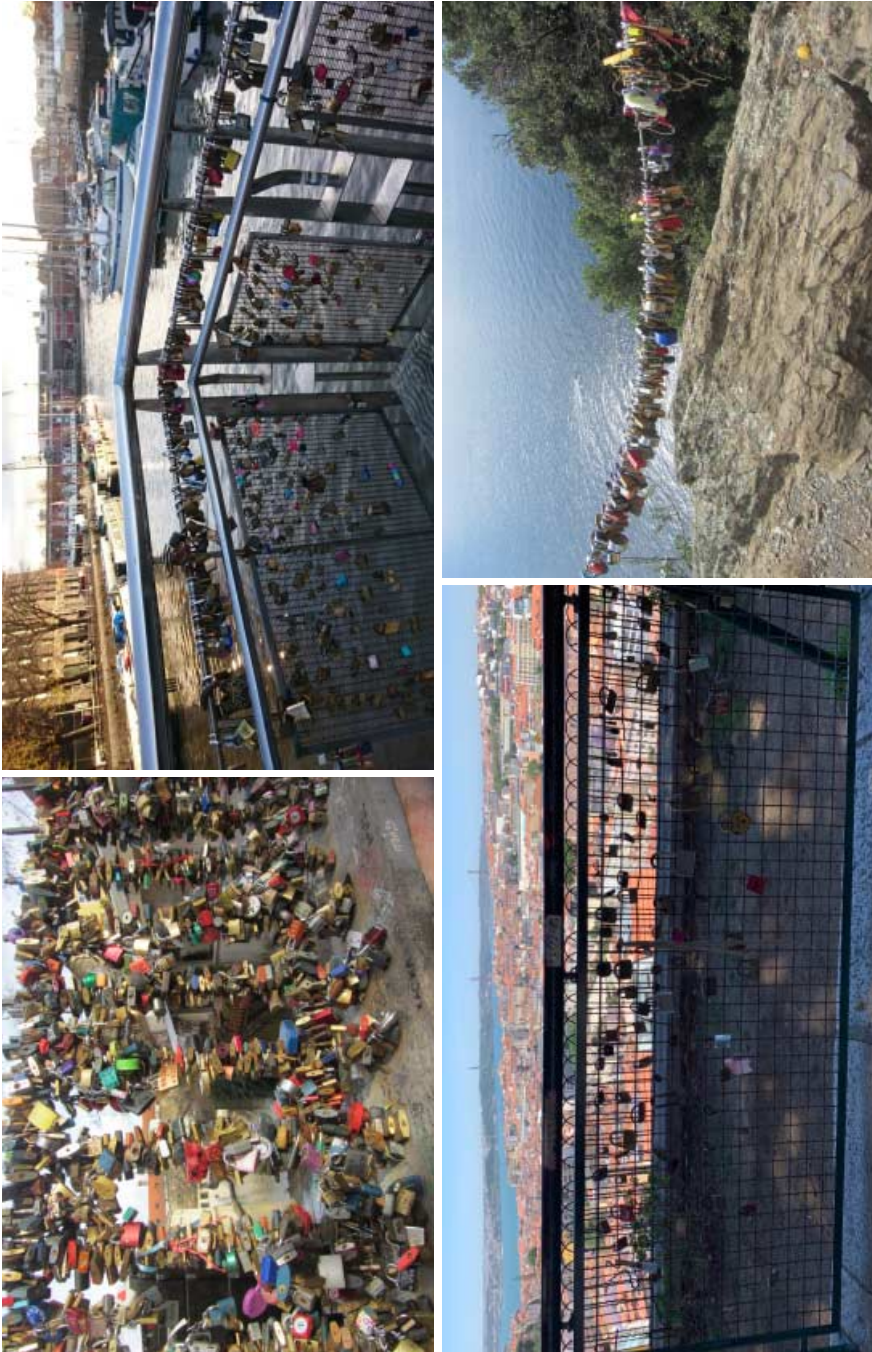


Illustration 0.1. Love-lock assemblages in Prague, Bristol, Lisbon and along the Cinque Terre, Italy. Photographs by the author.



Illustration 0.2. Love-locks overlapping and locked to each other on the Pont Neuf, Paris. Photograph by the author.

The love-locks form what folklorist Jack Santino has termed ‘folk assemblages’: spontaneous accumulations that invite further participation from others.¹⁷ Cathy Preston, contemporary legends scholar, applies this concept to her work on ‘panty trees’ and ‘shoe trees’, claiming that such assemblages evoke the sense of an imagined community:

that imagined community being the various individuals, usually anonymous, who have responded in kind to the acts of earlier individuals and who frequently envision their responses as linking them to a group of people who, though invisible to them, are made visible by that which they have left behind. Inclusive in this definition is also a sense that, though community-based, the object is not institutionally sanctioned.¹⁸

In a similar vein, folklorist Lynne McNeill coined the term ‘serial collaborative creations’. These creations share four features, all of which can be applied to a love-lock assemblage:

1. People come into contact with objects through geographical movement. Either the objects are passed from person to person (type A) or the people pass by the objects (type B).
2. People involved contribute to the object, either by adding to its physical form or by continuing its journey through some sort of personal effort.
3. Multiple people interact with the object, but they do it one at a time or in small, sequential groups.

4. Those who interact with the object individually (or in small groups) are aware of others' involvement with the object's existence, though they may not interact with them directly. This awareness is expected and necessary; the object, by virtue of being a chain object, implies the presence of past and future participants.¹⁹

Love-lock assemblages are clearly a type B serial collaborative creation, in that they are encountered through people's movement: as they pass a particular site, as they cross a bridge and so on. People contribute to it by adding to its physical form – that is, by adding their own love-lock – and they do this one couple or group at a time, aware of the fact that others have contributed before them and others will no doubt contribute after.

So, through structured deposition, folk assemblages grow. And through the growth and establishment of folk assemblages, space becomes place. This, too, is an archaeological concept. '[P]eople leave things,' Miles Richardson writes. 'And in their leaving they establish the location as a place.'²⁰ John Chapman conceptualises 'place' as 'space objectified', as space that has been imbued with meaning and value through human activity and the objects they place or move within it.²¹ In the case of the love-lock assemblages, place is established via the custom of love-locking and the structured deposition of the love-locks themselves. A bridge, for example, becomes *the love-lock bridge*; a gate becomes *the love-lock gate* – but not only because of the tangible alterations of a growing assemblage. This process of 'neutral space' transitioning to 'meaningful place', to use Fontijn's wording, is the result of people's connections with it. Deposition fixes a connection between depositor and place by creating a shared history, a shared memory of the depositional event.²²

Studying the Love-Lock

The vast majority of scholars who have engaged with the above concepts apply them to objects and activities from prehistory and history. Obviously, love-locks are neither. As *Chapter One: Dating Love* will demonstrate, love-locking may date to the early twentieth century but was definitely not a widespread practice until the twenty-first. It is therefore a contemporary custom. The terms outlined above, however, are no less applicable because of this modernity, and this is certainly not the first study of contemporary assemblages. As we will see in *Chapter Three: Excavating Love*, many scholars – archaeologists, anthropologists, folklorists – have engaged with the material culture of modern-day depositional practices, from Jenny Blain and Robert Wallis' examination of Neo-Pagan deposits at prehistoric sites to Tristan Hulse's treatment of handwritten prayers at a holy well in Wales.²³

Nor is this the first study of love-locking, which is unsurprising considering the extent of the custom's dissemination. Art historian Cynthia Hammond was one of the first scholars to engage with the subject in her 2010 article 'Renegade Ornament and the Image of the Post-Socialist City: The Pécs "Love Locks", Hungary'.²⁴ In this, she dates a love-lock fence in Janus Pannonius Utca, close to Pécs Cathedral, to the 1980s. Hammond's examination into the history of this early assemblage is discussed in *Chapter One: Dating Love*; what is of significance here is the conceptual framework she applies to the custom. Designating love-locks 'renegade ornaments' because of their unsanctioned nature, particularly at a time when Pécs was still under the hold of Soviet social control, Hammond illustrates how this particular assemblage is representative of layers of control and dissent in the city.

Social scientist Kai-Olaf Maiwald is another scholar who has explored love-locking. He adopts an objective–hermeneutic approach in his 2016 investigation into the symbolic meaning of what he dubs 'padlocking' at the Hohenzollern Bridge, Cologne, entitled 'An Ever-Fixed Mark? On the Symbolic Coping with the Fragility of Partner Relationships by Means of Padlocking'.²⁵ Maiwald dates the Hohenzollern Bridge assemblage to 2008. He acknowledges the irregularity of focusing on an artefact in sociological research but demonstrates the valuable insight gained into the 'vivid social practice' of love-locking by studying the symbolism of its components: the padlock, the key, the inscriptions and the bridge. These are, he argues, highly appropriate for a custom that he interprets as acknowledging the fragility of romantic relationships. Maiwald's theories will be considered further in *Chapter Five: Symbolising Love*.

In their 2017 article 'Bridges, Locks and Love: Most Tumski in Wrocław and Thousands of Love Bridges Worldwide: New Secular Sanctuaries in Today's Public Space?', Felix Richter and Verena Pfeiffer-Kloss place the love-lock within the context of the history of signs of romantic love in the public space of the city, alongside symbols carved into trees and benches.²⁶ Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, they explore the notion of love-lock bridges as new urban secular sanctuaries, focusing on Most Tumski in Wrocław, Poland, which they estimate to contain 40,000 love-locks. They also contemplate love-locking as a ritual, dividing the physical act of fixing a love-lock into eleven micro-rituals; these are considered in *Chapter Four: Locking Love*.

Artist Lachlan MacDowell considers love-locks within the context of graffiti and street art, aligning them with other contemporary assemblages of structured deposits, such as shoe trees and chewing gum walls. All of these, she claims, 'provide excellent illustrations of a blunt, quantitative form of stigmergy and the ways in which certain urban practices cluster spatially, without direct coordination'.²⁷ Central to MacDowell's study is the concept of 'stigmergy', which was originally a biological concept applied to swarm intelligence but now refers more generally to the process whereby one action leaves a trace on the environment,

subsequently stimulating another action. This applies to love-locks in respect to the growth of the accumulation; as was stated above, the affixing of one love-lock (one action that leaves a trace on the environment) tends to attract more love-locks, and the assemblage proliferates.

Most recently, consumer culture theorist Stéphane Borraz has published his findings from a five-year (2012–2017) study of love-locking in Paris, which involved empirical fieldwork, interviewing and netnography.²⁸ Describing the custom as a ‘new consumer love ritual’ conducted at modern-day ‘pilgrimage sites’, Borraz maps the sequence of events that form the ritual onto Van Gennep’s three-staged rite of passage.²⁹ The preliminal stage consists of the love-lockers examining the other locks of the assemblage and identifying a suitable place for their own; the liminal stretches from the decoration of the love-lock to the disposing of the key; and the postliminal is the sharing of the experience with others, often via social media. Borraz’s valuable findings and discussion of his fieldwork are drawn on throughout this book.

Other scholars have engaged with love-locking more concisely as part of broader studies. Joana Breidenbach and Pál Nyíri briefly refer to love-locks on sale to tourists at the Yellow Mountains and Mt. Emei World Heritage sites in China, in their article on new tourist nations and the globalisation of nature. Their article includes a photograph of tourists affixing love-locks at the summit of Mt. Emei.³⁰ Oksana Mykytenko considers the rich semiotic status of the padlock and key in Slavic wedding traditions, often understood as erotic symbols, in order to contextualise the love-lock custom; her work is engaged with in *Chapter Five: Symbolising Love*.³¹ In 2016, in their work on archaeological approaches to graffiti, Ursula Frederick and Anne Clarke included love-locks in their list of examples of contemporary graffiti, alongside concrete street art and ‘knitfitti’, which ‘transform private and public spaces alike in surprising, subversive and often humorous ways’.³² And in 2017, Maria Gravari-Barbas and Sébastien Jacquot drew on love-locks in Paris as an example of mobilisation within discourses of tourism-related tensions, exploring how local residents campaigned against the custom, a subject that will be explored in greater detail in *Chapter Seven: Unlocking Love*.³³

Most scholars engaging with love-locks have done so within the context of urban studies. Urban scenographer Jekaterina Lavrinec considers love-locking an ‘urban ritual’, one that identifies citizens as active ‘interpreters’ of urban space and ‘reinvents urban places by producing alternative meaning and encouraging alternative scenarios of behaviour’.³⁴ Engineer Christian Walloth, drawing on Hammond’s work on the Pécs assemblage, characterises love-locks as ‘emergent [i.e. unplanned and in principle unpredictable] qualities’ in a city environment. Walloth explores the influence they have on urban development strategies, considering how Pécs integrated the city’s love-locks, which were an unplanned city feature, into its cultural and marketing image.³⁵ In addition, in 2018, Simon Sleight equated love-lock assemblages with roadside shrines, dubbing them

“vernacular” memorials’ and contemplating them within his examination of the city as a palimpsest of memories, which are emotionally inscribed onto the urban landscape.³⁶

Undoubtedly, considering the global nature of this custom, there are far more studies of love-locks written in languages other than English. But this serves as a useful overview, demonstrating the various perspectives from which love-locks have been viewed and engaged with, from art history and semiotics to sociology and urban planning. Clearly, the custom is multifaceted enough to be studied from myriad angles, but more than this: it sheds light on those myriad angles. Love-locks can tell us something about art history and semiotics, sociology and urban planning.

Methodology

The interdisciplinarity of the above corpus of studies has been deliberately replicated throughout this monograph, with each chapter taking a different methodological approach to the custom. Throughout, however, participant observation has been the key methodology.³⁷ I have spent time, ranging from thirty minutes to six hours (one very cold Valentine’s Day in Manchester, UK), standing at love-lock assemblages, examining the love-locks and observing members of the public who approach. I often took only mental notes so as to be as unobtrusive as possible and then wrote up my observations immediately after leaving the site. My primary aim in this was to gain insight into how people engage with these assemblages: roughly what proportions of people simply pass them by, stop to examine them or add their own love-lock? If they are in groups, what do they say about the custom? Do they photograph the love-locks? Do they touch them? This method of data collection was conducted at various locations in Australia, Austria, Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Russia, Scotland, Spain and Sweden. A limitation of this method of data collection was its strong European focus, and future studies would undoubtedly benefit from a more global scale.

The Eurocentrism of my observations was slightly offset by the global perspective of another methodology employed: online ethnography (or netnography), which involved viewing videos of participation in the custom globally, uploaded by the participants to video-sharing site YouTube, as well as engagement with posts on Instagram and Twitter.³⁸ I did not participate in these online communities but simply watched the videos and observed the photographs posted, checking for new material on a weekly basis between 2017 and 2019. As with the participant observations, this method provided valuable insight into how people are engaging with love-lock assemblages, and the significance of the filming,

photographing and digital sharing of these engagements is explored in *Chapter Four: Locking Love*.

In addition to observations and netnography, I conducted interviews with people who had participated in the custom. Contact was made with interviewees via word-of-mouth or local authorities. Interviews were often via questionnaires, with the participants writing their responses, sometimes followed by further questions or requests for elaboration. Questions varied depending upon the interviewee but often included the following: When and where did you lock your love-lock? Why did you choose that location? Who were you with? Why did you participate in this custom? When did you become aware of the custom? When and where did you purchase your love-lock? How did you decorate it? Did you photograph/film your participation/love-lock? If so, did you share the picture/video with anyone? Have you visited your love-lock since locking it? In most cases, couples who had deposited a love-lock together answered the questions together.

Contemporary archaeological methods were employed at every location visited. The material culture of the love-locks was examined; assemblages were photographed and individual inscriptions and adornments were recorded. Observations were made on how the assemblages were clustered; whether their deposition had damaged the host structure; what types of padlocks had been used; and whether any keys were visible (only one was ever seen: rusting on a ledge beneath Queen's Park Bridge, Chester, UK). In Manchester, a running inventory was made of love-locks added to the Oxford Road Bridge from 2014–2019; every new addition was photographed, assigned a catalogue number and recorded in detail. This dataset, now containing over 700 love-locks, provides insight into how an assemblage forms and grows over time and is the basis of *Chapter Three: Excavating Love*.³⁹

The Following Pages

Chapter One: Dating Love traces the history of love-locking, taking a chronological approach. While acknowledging the futility of seeking origins for a folk custom, and admitting the difficulties faced while researching for this chapter, it attempts to disentangle fact from fiction and determine where contemporary love-locking began, why its popularity grew and how it spread. It examines twentieth-century love-lock assemblages in Serbia, Hungary and Italy, focusing on Moccia's novel *Ho voglia di te* as an impetus for global spread and subsequently contemplating the phenomena of conversion from popular culture to popular custom. The chapter subsequently turns to tourist folklore, identifying tourists (in particular, tourists who are also social media users) as a key group in the perpetuation and dissemination of the custom.

Chapter Two: Consuming Love takes the earlier reference to the transition from popular culture to popular custom as its starting point and delves more deeply into this process. Since Moccia's use of love-locks in his teen romance novel, the custom has appeared in myriad pieces of popular culture: television shows, films, literature and music. This chapter considers the various uses of the love-lock as folk motif in fiction, whether it is employed as incidental backdrop, as a symbolic element adopted to communicate a message or materialise a sentiment, or as integral to the plot itself. Thus through the love-lock, the chapter explores what these uses demonstrate about the relationship – or interrelationship – between folkloric custom and popular culture.

Chapter Three: Excavating Love takes a material culture approach to love-locks, identifying them as ex-votos. The folk assemblages of love-locks, this chapter stresses, are tangible traces of ritual and should be examined archaeologically. Following a review of material culture studies of contemporary ritual, the chapter introduces a primary case study: an assemblage on Oxford Road in Manchester, UK, for which empirical data has been collected since 2014. Drawing on this dataset, this chapter demonstrates the value of recording a folk assemblage during its formation, as opposed to post formation, and the insight this gains us into the pace, the people and the purpose of deposition.

Chapter Four: Locking Love provides an ethnographic examination of love-locking, noting that as useful as a material cultural approach has proven to be, the participants themselves provide the most invaluable insights into the *how* and the *why* of their engagement with the custom. It commences with some storytelling, drawing on interviews with people who have locked their love to outline their experiences with this practice, which is here identified as a 'ritual', one that is often unofficially documented by its participants. Through these interviews and further observations, the love-lock is gleaned as a planned deposit, an object of emotion, a mnemonic device and as an entangled object with a biography that continues beyond its deposition.

Chapter Five: Symbolising Love questions how this one custom appeals to, and has been adopted by, the myriad and myriadly diverse inhabitants of six different continents. While it is wary of claiming universal symbols, it identifies the symbolic potency of the love-lock as a primary factor in its successful establishment and rapid, widespread dissemination. This chapter thus takes a semiotic approach to the custom, exploring both the padlock and the bridge as symbols with global vigour, not claiming such symbolisms as the origins of love-locking but as insight into why such vast numbers of people today have proven so receptive to this contemporary custom.

Chapter Six: Selling Love examines the myriad examples of love-locks being harnessed for tourism and commercial gain worldwide. In some instances, love-locking is encouraged or even deliberately implemented, whether for the revenue it creates – sometimes for charitable causes – or to foster a sense of communal

identity. Other examples see the love-locking custom and its symbolism harnessed for advertisements, or love-locks commodified and sold in other forms, from Pandora charms to chocolates. This chapter argues that across the majority of these cases there is a sense that, through commercialisation, the custom has become inherent to the places themselves, through the processes of place-marketing and place-making.

While the majority of this book considers the perspectives of those individuals and groups in favour of love-locking, *Chapter Seven: Unlocking Love* recognises how polarising this custom has proven to be. It therefore adopts the other viewpoint, exploring the love-lock as object of controversy and the love-lock assemblage as contested landscape. Detailing the various methods employed to discourage the deposition of love-locks and contemplating what happens to those assemblages that find themselves removed by local authorities, this chapter questions what the contested nature of the custom reveals about perceptions of heritage 'value'. All of the above themes are drawn together in the conclusion by way of one final case study: a literacy examination sat by secondary school students in Ontario in 2010.

A brief note now about the limitations of this book. There is an undeniable Eurocentrism to many of the case studies used throughout, with a particular focus on Britain due to my geographic base. A lack of non-English sources is also shamefully apparent, testifying to my shortcomings in language abilities. As the global nature of love-locking is so central to my interest in it, every effort was made to broaden the scope of research, with resort to a number of invaluable translators who kindly gave up their time to aid me with Serbian, Italian, German and Portuguese sources.⁴⁰ A western bias is still clearly evident though, and so it is with hope that I appeal to fellow researchers worldwide – be you folklorists, archaeologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, historians, geographers or heritage specialists – to either begin or continue metaphorically unlocking love-locks. For both an in-depth *and* culturally broad study of love-locking, we are going to need researchers on every continent to do justice to this global phenomenon.

Notes

1. Frosh, *The Image Factory*, 8.
2. *Ibid.*, 127.
3. Eco, 'Critique of the Image', 35–37.
4. Eras, *Locks and Keys throughout the Ages*, 15.
5. *Ibid.*, 18–20.
6. <https://web.archive.org/web/20111008030711/http://www.historicallocks.com/en/site/hl/Articles/The-history-of-padlocks/Roman-Era-500-BC300-AD/> [Accessed 11/07/2019].
7. Eras, *Locks and Keys throughout the Ages*, 91.

8. Ibid., 59.
9. Ibid., 104–9.
10. Ibid., 115.
11. <https://www.diy.com/departments/hardware/locks-padlocks/padlocks/DIY580699.cat?sort=rating> [Accessed 11/07/2019].
12. Richards and Thomas, 'Ritual Activity and Structured Deposition in Later Neolithic Wessex', 189–218; Garrow, 'Odd Deposits and Average Practice', 85–115.
13. Richards and Thomas, 'Ritual Activity and Structured Deposition', 215.
14. Harris, 'Agents of Identity', 46.
15. Fontijn, *Sacrificial Landscapes*, 260.
16. Gamble, *Origins and Revolutions*, 122.
17. Santino, 'Performative Commemoratives, the Personal, and the Public', 363–72.
18. Preston, 'Panty Trees, Shoe Trees, and Legend', 12.
19. McNeill, 'Portable Places', 285–86.
20. Richardson, 'The Gift of Presence', 260.
21. Chapman, *Fragmentation in Archaeology*, 190.
22. Thomas, *Understanding the Neolithic*, 87; Fontijn, *Sacrificial Landscapes*, 34–35.
23. Blain and Wallis, 'Representing Spirit', 89–108; Hulse, 'A Modern Votive Deposit at a North Welsh Holy Well', 31–42.
24. Hammond, 'Renegade Ornament and the Image of the Post-Socialist City', 181–95.
25. Maiwald, 'An Ever-Fixed Mark?'
26. Richter and Pfeiffer-Kloss, 'Bridges, Locks and Love', 187–202.
27. MacDowall, 'Graffiti, Street Art and Theories of Stigmergy', 41.
28. Borraz, 'Love and Locks', 7–21.
29. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*.
30. Breidenbach and Nyíri, "'Our Common Heritage'", 322–30.
31. Mykytenko, 'Padlock and Key as Attributes of the Wedding Ceremony', 487–96.
32. Frederick and Clarke, 'Signs of the Times', 54–57.
33. Gravari-Barbas and Jacquot, 'No Conflict?', 44–61.
34. Lavrinec, 'Urban Scenography', 22.
35. Walloth, 'Emergence in Complex Urban Systems?', 121–32.
36. Sleight, 'Memory in the City', 139.
37. See O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*.
38. See Robert Kozinets's 2010 work *Netnography*, which centralises the knowledge that 'Our social worlds are going digital. As a consequence, social scientists around the world are finding that to understand society they must follow people's social activities and encounters onto the Internet and through other technologically-mediated communications' (Kozinets, *Netnography*, 1). As well as 'netnography', Mariann Domokos lists 'cyberethnography', 'virtual ethnography', 'virtual anthropology' and 'e-folklore' as terms that have been applied to online ethnography (Domokos, 'Towards Methodological Issues in Electronic Folklore', 286).
39. An enhanced version of the complete love-locks catalogue is available online through Berghahn Digital Archaeology at <https://berghahnbooks.com/digitalarchaeology>.
40. Particular thanks to Raško Ramandanski, Marija Maric, Francesca Benetti, Chiara Zuanni, Cait Houlbrook and Ami Houlbrook.