New Proposals

Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Volume Nine, Number 2, April 2018

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Volume 9, Number 2, April 2018
ISSN 1715-6718

Our Mandate
This journal represents an attempt to explore issues, ideas, and problems that lie at the intersection between the academic disciplines of social science and the body of thought and political practice that has constituted Marxism over the last 150 years. New Proposals is a journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry that is dedicated to the radical transformation of the contemporary world order. We see our role as providing a platform for research, commentary, and debate of the highest scholarly quality that contributes to the struggle to create a more just and humane world, in which the systematic and continuous exploitation, oppression, and fratricidal struggles that characterize the contemporary sociopolitical order no longer exist.

Contact Us
New Proposals online at http://www.newproposals.ca
New Proposals Blog and Discussion at http://newproposals.blogspot.com
Email info@newproposals.ca

Cover: Tsimshian Guardians Against Oil Tankers – Leading the Way for an Ecologically Sound Future. Photographer, Charles Menzies

New Proposals

Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Volume 9, Numbers 2, April 2018. ISSN 1715-6718

Special Theme Issue: Autoethnography – Interegating the Anthropologist

Contents

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 5-6

Introduction

Charles R. Menzies
New Proposals Editorial Collective

Autoethnography – A Necessary Challenge

Autoethnography is a form of writing and research that I have long engaged in. I find in the form a way to dance back and forward between the personal and the wider political analytic perspectives. It isn't for everyone, but it is worth a try once and a while. This issue of *New Proposals* contains seven amazing examples. These papers were selected from among three cohorts of graduate students enrolled in a required history of theory course I had the privilege of teaching at UBC (2013-2016).

There are many ways to teach a theory of anthropology course. Typically students will be assigned a genealogy type assignment – something that asks students to delving into the linkages and histories of particular schools or theorists. They might also be asked to critically review past theories against current fashions. Or perhaps they will be directed to explore some specific theoretical issue and how its treatment may have changed through time. These are only some of the exercises that might be assigned. I have from time to time drawn on them myself, but I feel there are other things we can also do given these kinds of courses are, in part, professional development courses.

At some point during the course I have students track down peer-review publications of departmental faculty, but the caveat is that these papers have to come for a sub-discipline unfamiliar to the student. A further condition is that they are not to ask either the faculty member in question or someone potentially knowledgeable to recommend a paper. Rather, the students must find one themselves that captures their attention in some manner. Once they have found a paper then they must present the paper to the class – not a summary – but a highlight of what was interesting, what stood out, what didn't make sense to them (in a meta, not specific sense). This exercise is paired with a second one in which they are charged with reading a work by a class mate (a thesis, a class essay, a publication) that their classmate provides to them. Both of these exercises are designed to explore our self conceptions of our discipline, to evaluated these perceptions against the creations of others, and to find one's place in some way in this field of textual productions. But I don't think that goes far enough.

Sociocultural anthropology delves into other peoples lives. We ask questions, collect data on lives of others. We talk about situating ourselves in our work. Yet I have observed over the years that anthropologists are among the most protective of themselves when it comes to being asked questions similar to those we ask our correspondents of research. This is where autoethnography comes in.

I consider autoethnography as a necessary challenge for all of us. While it isn't the same as having someone else interrogate us and then write up our lives, it is a nice proxy. Autoethnography allows us to apply the same kinds of analysis and disembodying objectifications upon ourselves as we might sometimes be accused of doing to others. The experience of using our own lives, experience, and knowledge as the data for an analytic paper can be a useful experience. Each of the students in the three versions of the course I taught jumped into this exercise wholeheartedly; some expressed discomfort at first; others found it a delight. They all did amazing jobs. The seven papers here cover a diversity of sub-disciplinary vantages points, subject matters, and writing styles. I commend them to you as striking professional pieces of reflection and introspection.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 7-18

Textual Ethnography: The Art of Listening to Texts

Daniel Frim
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: In this autoethnographic essay, I reflect on my efforts to move beyond the conceptual and aesthetic horizons of my cultural background via the analysis of texts produced within foreign cultures. I examine several relevant interpretive strategies, stressing the distinction between projective and reconstructive modes of exegesis. I then discuss the challenges that are involved in gaining an appreciation for the aesthetic and emotional qualities of foreign texts without misreading them in the hermeneutic framework of one's own culture.

KEYWORDS: text, exegesis, cultural projection, cultural reconstruction, empathy, Northwest Coast, Bible.

What excites me most as a student of anthropology is the opportunity to explore cultural difference in its various forms. Difference is what enables me to move beyond what I know, to ask new questions and to receive answers that I could never have predicted. As a Westerner who lives in a globalizing world, I constantly encounter familiar values, familiar beliefs, and familiar aesthetics. The fact that the world speaks to me in my own terms is, I recognize, a significant (and inequitable) source of privilege in many regards. Still, there is great value and importance in attempting to understand other cultures in *their* terms. This is a challenge that I must seek deliberately, and I do so using a set of approaches that I call "textual ethnography."

Textual ethnography, as I aim to practice it, is an attempt to achieve inter-cultural understanding via careful and devoted *listening*. I use the terms "textual" and "listening" quite broadly. By "listening," I refer to a wide range of activities, which include sitting and hearing a narrative unfold from the mouth of a storyteller; reading an old book written by an author whom one will never have the chance to meet; watching a newly released film or television show; etc. The form of listening that I am describing is not defined by an aural medium, but by the listener's humility and willingness to be taught by someone else without trying to alter or add to his or her teaching. A "text," for the purposes of this discussion, is any relatively fixed unit of human expression that can be meticulously examined and reexamined. In a two-sided conversation, the interlocutors constantly adjust to one another's expectations and levels of understanding. Therefore, one of the advantages of studying fairly stable, pre-packaged units of expression is that doing so allows me to "listen" to people as they say things that I may not want to hear or that I may struggle to comprehend, without having them censor or trans-

late their thoughts for my sake.[1] My task as a textual ethnographer is to comprehend what is being said as deeply and accurately as possible.

The method of approaching cultures *through* texts is closely related to the method of approaching cultures *as* texts. The latter approach has been developed in depth by Clifford Geertz, who has described "The culture of a people" as "an ensemble of texts" (Geertz 1973:452). In Geertzian theory, the texts or "symbols" that constitute a culture are regarded as the essential tools with which "the members of a society communicate their world-view, value-orientations, ethos, and all the rest to one another, to future generations – and to anthropologists" (Ortner 1984:129). The task of the ethnographer, then, is to translate these frames of meaning across the communicative gaps that separate different cultures. Geertz makes clear the epistemological limits of his culture-as-text methodology. The textual analysis of culture, he suggests, does not allow the ethnographer to "perceive what his informants perceive" on an experiential level. Instead, it provides the anthropologist with an opportunity to discern the cultural concepts that "they [the 'informants'] perceive 'with,'" or, in other words, it is a way of "searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms … in terms of which, in each place, people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another" (Geertz 1975:48). Geertz warns that ethnographers' attempts to achieve genuine "empathy" with their consultants often devolve into the transposition of consultants' thoughts to "the framework" of the ethnographers' cultural categories (Geertz 1975:48). For Geertz, then, the forms of inter-cultural understanding that ethnography can help generate are cognitive and intellectual, not emotional or experiential.

Paul Stoller, by contrast, suggests that it is possible to achieve far more visceral understandings of foreign cultures and their texts.[2] In an autoethnographic study, Stoller (2004) alternates between describing his training in the art of Songhay sorcery while conducting ethnographic research in Niger, and narrating his later experiences as a cancer patient. He recalls how his knowledge of sorcery affected how he coped with his illness, as well as how his illness prompted him to embrace Songhay sorcery more fully. For example, moments before receiving his first dose of chemotherapy, Stoller felt a sense of shock when he realized how "disruptive" his course of treatment would be. Then, however, he heard the voice of his Songhay teacher and felt fortified by it (Stoller 2004:78-79). He immediately performed a Songhay ritual involving recitation of the genji how, "an incantation that harmonizes the forces of the bush," whose state of disarray is associated with illness (Stoller 2004:80). During the years between Stoller's training in Niger and his initial diagnosis as a cancer patient, he had often practiced Songhay rituals, including the recitation of the *genji how*, but in that period of time, the incantation had gradually "become a sequence of words" devoid of meaning for him (Stoller 2004:95-97). By contrast, Stoller recalls that when he faced cancer,

> the words of the *genji how* surged like a current into my consciousness. They had become central weapons in my fight against lymphoma. I finally realized that I had misunderstood the deep meaning of the incantation. It was a sorcerous weapon that could divert death. It was a sequence of words that could reestablish harmony in chaotic circumstances. What I hadn't realized was that the power of the incantation – not to forget the wisdom of Songhay sorcery – comes from the combination of two components: disharmony and peace. By creating harmonious peace in the infusion room, the *genji how* primed me to confront the devastation of disaster. [Stoller 2004:97]

Here, Stoller suggests that his hermeneutic revelation regarding a foreign text was inextricably linked to his personal experiences. Only when he felt "primed" by the *genji how* "to confront the devastation of disaster" did he truly understand (or believe he understood) "the deep meaning of the incantation." Stoller's approach, in this regard, differs markedly from Geertz's methodology. Rather than conducting a

1 Below, I will discuss a case in which someone told me a narrative and subsequently explained it to me. This qualifies as textual ethnography, because although I did ultimately hear the narrator's "translation" of the tale, I first heard the story in a foreign form that was difficult for me to understand.

2 The dichotomy I have established between cognitive and experiential modes of inter-cultural understanding and my approach to this dichotomy are influenced by what I learned from an undergraduate ethnographic methods course entitled Folklore and Mythology 97: Fieldwork and Ethnography in Folklore, taught by Professor Deborah Foster, during the spring of 2012.

strictly intellectual, cognitive analysis of the concepts underlying Songhay sorcery, Stoller claims to have gained a visceral, experiential understanding of the *genji how* by applying it to his own struggles in life.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both Stoller's and Geertz's approaches. Geertz's method is limited to producing accurate analytic statements regarding the systems of meaning through which cultures operate. It does not offer the opportunity to experience what it feels like to be a member of a different culture. Yet, by relinquishing the pursuit of "empathy" (Geertz 1975:48), this approach minimizes the risk of misunderstanding a foreign culture by unwittingly projecting onto it elements of one's own culture. Stoller's method offers to fill in the experiential gaps left by Geertzian analysis, but it does so at the expense of precision. Geertz clearly identifies what he seeks to discover, namely other people's understandings of their own culture. By contrast, although Stoller captures an understanding of Songhay sorcery and the *genji how*, he does not indicate precisely whose understanding this is. When Stoller describes his exegetical revelation regarding the *genji how*, we are left wondering whether he has *discovered* a previously existing Songhay interpretation of the text, or whether he has *created* his own, novel interpretation. Because Stoller's approach does not clearly distinguish between these different exegetical modes, it does not maximize texts' capacity to shed light on foreign cultures in their own terms, and it must be exercised with caution.

Nevertheless, when analyzing the texts of a foreign culture through a Geertzian lens,[3] it is often valuable to borrow a key element of Stoller's methodology: using one's own experiential capacities as testing grounds for the experiential properties of texts. Texts are meant to evoke feelings and aesthetic effects, and as Geertz himself admits (1975), his ethnographic approach does not involve experiencing such effects firsthand. As I indicated in the previous paragraph, I do not favour the wholesale adoption of the hermeneutic methods Stoller uses to understand Songhay incantations. But when one operates within cautious, culturally appropriate hermeneutic boundaries that have been articulated via the form of analysis Geertz advocates, there are times when it makes sense to apply one's experiential intuitions to the interpretation of foreign texts. It is possible to alternate between intellectual precision and experiential depth in one's understanding of textual material, allowing these two hermeneutic goals to complement one another (cf. Geertz 1975:52-53).[4] Both of these interpretive perspectives are valuable, just as an artist's colourful drawing of how an ancient building may once have looked is valuable alongside an archaeologist's high-precision sketch of the withering remains of the building's foundations.

In this paper, I will reflect on some of the ways in which I approach foreign texts. I will begin by discussing Genesis 22, the well-known Biblical narrative in which Abraham nearly sacrifices his son, Isaac. Although this text's ideological underpinnings and aesthetic style are, in large part, foreign to me, other aspects of the narrative help bridge this cultural gap. It is therefore possible for me to absorb some of the emotional impact of the story on a visceral, intuitive level without projecting meanings from my own culture that would have seemed alien to the text's ancient Israelite authors. I will subsequently examine texts from the late antique Near East and from the Northwest Coast of North America that are more difficult for me to understand. This discussion will shed light on some of the challenges involved in striking an appropriate balance (cf. Geertz 1975:48)[5] between an interpretive approach that is designed to maximize intellectual accuracy and an approach that allows for more experiential depth in reading, or "listening to," texts produced within other cultures.

3 Here, I do not mean taking a generally Geertzian, textual approach to culture as a whole. Instead, I mean taking a Geertzian approach to specific texts (e.g. songs, narratives, films, etc.) produced by a foreign culture.

4 This notion of successive alternation between two different methodological or interpretive paradigms is borrowed directly from Geertz (1975:52-53). See footnote 12 for a more detailed discussion of the close relationship between the method I propose and the method Geertz describes.

5 The notion of "balance" that I describe is based directly on Geertz's (1975:48) discussion of establishing the proper combination of or middle ground between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" understandings of culture "in anthropological analysis."

Sympathy From Across the Divide

In Genesis 22, foreign ideological and aesthetic elements occur alongside depictions of emotional experiences with which I can genuinely sympathize. As a result, when I read this text, it viscerally affects me, much as the *genji how* affects Stoller. I believe that my emotional appreciation for the text corresponds in certain ways to the emotional impact it was meant to have on its early Israelite audiences. The experience of reading Genesis 22, in other words, offers me a taste of the ethnographic "empathy" that Geertz (1975:48) describes as elusive. Below, I have provided my own literal translation of the Hebrew text of Genesis 22:1-13:

> And it was after these things, and God tested Abraham, and he said to him, "Abraham," and he said, "I am here." And he said, "Take your son, your only one, whom you have loved, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and raise him up there as a rising6 [i.e. a burnt offering] on one of the mountains that I will tell to you." And Abraham awoke in the morning, and he packed his donkey, and he took his two youths [i.e. servants] with him, as well as Isaac his son, and he took the wood of the rising [i.e. the firewood for the sacrifice], and he arose and went to the place that God told him. On the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes, and he saw the place from afar. And Abraham said to his youths, "Sit here with the donkey, and I and the youth [i.e. Isaac] will go to there, and we will bow [i.e. worship God] and return to you." And Abraham took the wood of the rising, and he placed it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife, and they went, the two of them, together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and he said, "My father," and he said, "I am here, my son," and he said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the rising?" And Abraham said, "God will see for himself the sheep for the rising, my son," and they went, the two of them, together. And they came to the place that God told him, and Abraham built the altar there, and he laid out the wood, and he bound Isaac his son, and he placed him on the altar above the wood. And Abraham sent his hand, and he took the knife to slaughter his son. And an angel of God called to him from the heavens, and he said, "Abraham, Abraham," and he said, "I am here." And he said, "Do not send your hand to the youth, and do not do anything to him, for now I know that you are fearful of God, and you have not held back your son, your only one, from me." And Abraham lifted his eyes, and he saw, and behold, a ram after it had gotten stuck in the bush by its horns, and Abraham went and took the ram, and he raised it for a rising in place of his son.

Many aspects of this text are alien to me as a 21st-century Western reader. On an aesthetic level, the narrative's consistent avoidance of visual description (Auerbach 1953:9) seems strange owing to my familiarity with visually detailed novels and films. Even stranger is the fact that the text never explicitly describes Abraham and Isaac's emotional experiences (Auerbach 1953:11).[7] However, the widest cultural gulf separating me from the text is not stylistic, but ideological. God tests Abraham by ordering him to kill his son, and Abraham passes the test when he proves his willingness to follow God's command. Genesis 22 gives voice to a hierarchy of values in which willingness to obey God trumps compassion, the protection of human life, and a father's duty to love and protect his child. This ethical system differs starkly from the ideological sensibilities of the largely secular, 21st-century Western culture in which I was brought up.

On an intellectual level, I am fascinated by the foreign qualities of Genesis 22. I am particularly intrigued by the absence in the text of any explicit descriptions of Abraham and Isaac's emotions (Auerbach 1953:11). I am curious what this might tell us about aspects of the ancient Israelites' worldview, such as their constructions of selfhood and individuality (Auerbach 1953:11-13). I am also interested in how this particular stylistic feature of Genesis 22 parallels other narrative traditions from around the world, including indigenous oral-literary texts from the Northwest Coast of North America (see, e.g., Ramsey 1977:9). When I read this short Biblical narrative, I am exposed to the concepts that the ancient

6 See the entry listed under *ʿōlâ/ʿōlâ* in Koehler and Baumgartner 2000.

7 My observations on the style of Genesis 22 are influenced throughout by Auerbach (1953) and Alter (2011).

Israelites used to "perceive 'with'" (Geertz 1975:48). While I cannot fully imagine what it would feel like to live in the society that produced Genesis 22, the text provides a window through which I can contemplate, analyze, and attempt to describe this culture's aesthetic and ideological values from the methodological perspective that Geertz has articulated.

The foreign qualities that I have identified in Genesis 22 and the intellectual curiosity that they stimulate do not prevent me from empathizing with the authors of the narrative and with the character Abraham as he prepares to sacrifice his son. Although Genesis 22 assumes a hierarchy of values that differs from my culture's system, it also exhibits similarities to contemporary Western ethics. If the authors of the text unequivocally valued obedience over compassion, they would have allowed Abraham to slaughter Isaac. The fact that they did not indicates that to a certain degree, they shared my culture's emphasis on compassion and the sacredness of human life.

Furthermore, whether or not Genesis 22 describes his emotions explicitly, I believe that Abraham, as he would have been imagined by the text's authors and ancient Israelite audiences, experiences anguish and confusion while preparing to slaughter Isaac. Despite the cultural distance separating me from the authors of the text, I find it easy to sympathize with Abraham's inner turmoil. Admittedly, ancient Israelite audiences probably imagined Abraham's experience somewhat differently than I do. For example, Abraham's sense of duty to kill his son rests on his belief that it is always right do what God commands, no matter what God's orders entail. This is a belief that I, having been brought up in an individualistic North American culture fearful of blind obedience, consider foreign. Consequently, the authors and early audiences of the text probably imagined Abraham to have experienced stronger feelings of resignation and sadness than I would if I were in his position. As a 21st-century Westerner, I might feel angrier and more rebellious, because I would feel freer to call the fairness of God's command into question. Yet, regardless of the ideological differences separating me from the authors of the narrative, Abraham's plight moves me in ways that, I believe, generally correspond to the response the authors intended to elicit. The culturally foreign elements of Genesis 22 surround a relatable emotional core. When I empathize with Abraham or recognize that the authors of the story shared particular elements of my own ethical system, my visceral reaction to the narrative is even more powerful than my responses to texts produced within my own culture, because the familiar aspects of Genesis 22 stand out strongly against their foreign cultural backdrop.

Projection across the Divide

In this and the following section, I will examine foreign texts whose meanings, as understood by their authors and intended audiences, are not clear to me. I will discuss two possible ways of approaching such texts. The first, which I term "projective reading," involves interpreting foreign texts within the hermeneutic framework of one's own culture, thereby generating interpretations that differ from the meanings that the texts hold within their original cultural contexts. The second, which I term "reconstructive reading," involves carefully researching what a text might mean to the culture that produced it, ideally through direct consultation with the authors or with others who have a firsthand understanding of the text's cultural context. Some texts are more amenable to projective readings than others, usually owing to coincidental resonances between their content and important themes in the foreign reader's interpretive framework. Likewise, some texts are more amenable to reconstructive readings than others owing to factors such as how much information is available regarding their original cultural contexts and whether individuals who have firsthand familiarity with these contexts are available to help guide the process of interpretation. Reconstructive reading corresponds to Geertz's ethnographic methods, while projective reading is more closely comparable to Stoller's approach to foreign texts such as the *genji how*. As I have already suggested, Geertzian modes of reconstructive reading are best suited to maximize the *accuracy* of inter-cultural understandings developed through textual ethnography. Nevertheless, specific aspects of projective reading, if exercised with sufficient caution and scholarly rigour, can contribute to the experiential *depth* of these understandings.

Some foreign texts affect me emotionally in ways that stray significantly from the authors' intentions. I do not fully understand or connect personally with the ideological messages such texts were originally meant to convey or the aesthetic sensibilities that shaped them. I read these texts in ways that are relevant and meaningful within my own culture, but not within the cultural contexts from which they derived. In other words, I project onto these texts meanings that were not originally there. In order to illustrate this process of projective reading, I will discuss two narratives that evoke similar emotional responses in me even though they originated in two quite different cultural contexts. The first text is a short tale that was composed in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic in Sasanian Iraq. Owing to its brevity, I reproduce it here in full:

> Rabbah said: "Those who descend upon the sea told me: 'Between one wave and another [is a distance of] 300 parasangs, and the height of a wave is 300 parasangs. One time, we were going on the way, and a wave lifted us until we saw the resting place of a small star, and it was to me [i.e. it seemed to me] like [i.e. as large as] the area for sowing forty griv [a unit for measuring volumes of grain] of mustard seed. And had we been lifted more [i.e. any higher], we would have been burnt by its [the star's] heat.'"[8]

This narrative appears alongside 20 other, similar tales, almost all of which are attributed to specific rabbis (Rabbah is one of the most famous late antique rabbinic authorities), and which together form an extended textual digression in the Babylonian Talmud (a corpus that is normally devoted to the analysis of Jewish ritual law).

The second text that I will discuss is a Kwak'wala narrative from Vancouver Island or its environs, which was documented by George Hunt and published by Franz Boas under the title "Star Story" (1935:92-94 [translation]; 1943:92-94 [original text]). In it, a large group of Gusgimux^{w} and Go̓pinuχ^{w} hunters hunt for sea otters. By nightfall, all but two of the canoes in the hunting party have caught game. These canoes proceed ahead of the others. Suddenly, the hunters in these two canoes catch sight of a sea otter bearing a fireball "on the nape of its neck" (Boas 1935:94), and they harpoon the otter. It swims out to sea and then up into the heavens, "dragging behind the two small canoes as it was going upward" until it "stuck on our sky" (Boas 1935:94). At this point, the hunters and the sea otter are transformed into Orion and the Pleiades.

The Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and Kwak'wala narratives that I have introduced are, superficially, quite similar. In both tales, seafarers are raised up to the height of the stars. In reality, though, these narratives probably had divergent functions in the respective cultures that produced them. The function of Rabbah's narrative and the reasons for its inclusion in the Babylonian Talmud are mysterious, but the editors of the Talmud likely understood it as a tall tale, a narrative that calls attention to its own falseness by hyperbolically transgressing bounds of credulity (see Ben-Amos 1976). It is more difficult for me, as an outsider to Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw culture, to determine the function of "Star Story." However, given that it repeatedly mentions the names of two ancient Gusgimux^{w} and Go̓pinuχ^{w} hunters, it may have served as a source of prestige or as a justification of ceremonial prerogatives held by the descendents of these individuals. It also purports to explain why "these stars [i.e. Orion and the Pleiades] have their names" (Boas 1935:94). While I have not succeeded in determining the meaning of the Kwak'wala name given to the Pleiades in this narrative (k̓^{w}a̓ma̓ʔzo̓ye), Boas (1947:212) states that the Kwak'wala name for Orion (ʔəluzə̓weʔ) means "sea hunter on flat (i.e. in sky, Orion)." Therefore, "Star Story" may also have had an etiological function, providing a back-story for the name of the constellation Orion.[9]

By contrast, I tend to romanticize these texts as symbolic representations of unfulfilled longing. In both stories, the protagonists are lifted up to the stars. In my projective reading, the starry sky symbolizes an unattainable object of yearning. The stories' brief, understated descriptions of men being transported in watercraft to the altitude of the stars ironically highlight the impossibility of reaching the sky in real life.

8 Baba Batra 73a, Vilna edition, my translation.

9 See, however, Waterman 1914, who argues that even when narratives claim to provide etiological information, this is typically not their primary function.

Even in the two narratives, safe travel to the heavens ultimately proves elusive. The sailor in Rabbah's tale comes close to a star, but he does not reach it, and he reports that if he had, he would have been burnt. The hunters in "Star Story" reach the sky, but as a result, they are permanently transformed into constellations, unable to return home. Therefore, according to my reading, these stories have tragic implications: even in a world in which waves are 300 parasangs high and sea otters can drag men into the heavens, one cannot reach the sky and come back alive. The unattainable remains unattainable.

It is unlikely that my reading of "Star Story" and Rabbah's tale corresponds to how these narratives were understood in their original cultural contexts. While I believe that readers and audiences are entitled to form their own interpretations of texts independent of the authors' intentions, I have discussed my approach to Rabbah's tale and "Star Story" in order to show how textual ethnography should not be practiced. Projective reading is akin to a conversation in which the interlocutors "talk past" one another. Each speaker voices his or her own opinions while failing to understand or refusing to hear what the other interlocutor is saying. By contrast, when practicing textual ethnography, I aim to listen to texts, hoping to learn something new from the foreign worldviews of the authors, rather than trying to remold texts within my own interpretive framework.

Humility in the Face of Uncertainty

Instead of interpreting enigmatic foreign texts via projective reading, one can attempt to understand them with the direct assistance of their authors or other members of the cultures in which they were produced. In order to illustrate this process, I will review my attempts to understand a narrative that was told and subsequently explained to me by Mr. Allen J. Chickite (1937-2015), who lived in the village of Cape Mudge, British Columbia. Mr. Chickite was a member of the We Wai Kai First Nation (one of the most southerly Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw divisions), and he identified with the cultural traditions of both the Salishan-speaking groups to the southeast and the Wakashan-speaking groups to the northwest.[10] In order to give a sense of the style in which Mr. Chickite delivered the narrative, I have used commas to indicate short mid-sentence pauses and hyphens to indicate long mid-sentence pauses:

> That's the other one[11] with – the – house, that had mazes in it. No one, only, those, that, had the mythical, gift, knew that there was mazes in the house. This, young, princess, she has supposed to have done wrong. And, the father, had to, redeem himself, so he told the people in the Big House, that he must cut his daughter's neck off. No one, knew, that there was a maze in the four corners of the house. The daughter, laughed, when she was being lectured, about, being infidelity. He chopped her head off, but they didn't know that there was a mannequin. She ran across to the next floor, she came up to the other side, she laughed and laughed again. And another man chopped her head off. This went on for four corners of the universe, four times. Then – they took her body, with a burnt seal – shoved it up underneath the, where the fire was, in a casket. And they prayed for four days. People came to see her, while she was burnt alive. On the fourth day, she got up to dance. How did she do that? People thought that, there was mythical powers. It was all, durin', the darkness of the night, candle-lights, fire. How, each potlatch, has, a mythical way, of transpiring, life, and death.

When I first heard this story, it was completely opaque to me. I could not understand what it meant for a house to have "mazes in it." When I tried visualizing this description, I imagined a 19th-century Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw house containing a European hedge-maze (an exceptionally crude cultural projection). I was, likewise, confused by Mr. Chickite's sudden, unintroduced reference to a "mannequin" in the sentence describing the initial beheading of the chief's daughter. When the text continues by recounting that the princess "ran across to the next floor," I assumed that "the next floor" was a second

10 I use linguistically oriented terminology here out of respect for Mr. Chickite, who did not use the term "Kwakwaka'wakw" to describe his background. Instead, he used the terms "Salish" and "Kwagul" (Kwakiutl).

11 Mr. Chickite told this story immediately after finishing another one.

storey of the house. I was, consequently, puzzled by the fact that the princess reaches the second storey by "running across," rather than ascending stairs or a ladder. Furthermore, I was confused by the sentence, "This went on for four corners of the universe, four times." To what do the "four corners of the universe" refer, and how do they relate to the rest of the story?[12] Finally, and most importantly, I did not understand how the princess manages to revive herself each time she is killed. To me, the story sounded like a dream sequence, and I was open to the possibility that this was Mr. Chickite's deliberate intention. After all, a surreal aesthetic, with its capacity to create a heightened sense of awe toward the unknown, can have a variety of rhetorical functions. I was also aware, though, that while Mr. Chickite's narrative seemed dream-like to me, this impression likely reflected my ignorance of the story's cultural context.

A week after Mr. Chickite first told me the story of the princess, I met with him again in Cape Mudge. I admitted that I was having trouble visualizing the mazes in the house that he had described in the narrative, and I asked what these mazes looked like. He explained that they were tunnels underneath the floor and that they extended between the four corners of the house. As he proceeded to discuss the story, it soon became clear that the narrative describes a ceremonial procedure involving the simulated killing of a princess. During this simulation, the woman travels through tunnels from one corner of the house to the next. Each time she reaches a corner, a mannequin is raised up and beheaded there, and a seal bladder is punctured to make it seem as though the princess has been beheaded and blood is flowing from her neck. Finally, the princess follows a tunnel to the middle of the house, where she stands beneath the fire. A seal carcass is burned in a coffin above the fire, and the princess shouts as though it is she who is being burned. Mr. Chickite described the procedure as a form of "play," and he confirmed that the princess was beheaded only in "play," not in actuality. I had lacked the cultural background necessary to realize that the story depicts a ceremonial simulation rather than an actual execution.

It also became clear that I had overlooked a number of verbal clues to the meaning of the story. Most notably, after recounting that the princess revived and started to dance after being burned for four days, Mr. Chickite said, "How did she do that? People thought that, there was mythical powers." The phrase, "People thought that," suggests that although the princess appeared to have been resurrected by means of "mythical powers," this appearance was illusory. Likewise, Mr. Chickite noted twice that the "maze in the four corners of the house" was kept secret. The secrecy of the maze suggests that it had a role in generating the illusion of the princess's multiple deaths. While these clues had been available from the start, I needed to hear Mr. Chickite's explanation before I could recognize their significance.

Even after Mr. Chickite explained the story to me, I realized that my understanding of the princess narrative remained incomplete at best. I could never approximate the full range of interpretations and associations that this narrative might evoke for an indigenous audience with a fuller understanding of the story's cultural context. The process of reading and interpreting a text has both conceptual and experiential components, but it is difficult for me to capture both at once. When I first heard the princess narrative, my preliminary interpretation stemmed purely from my intuitive impression that the tale is surreal. When Mr. Chickite subsequently explained the narrative to me, I abandoned this initial intuition in favour of a more rationalistic, critical perspective. I came closer to viewing the narrative through Mr. Chickite's eyes, but I did not progress toward feeling its intended aesthetic effects.

Experiential appreciation of a text must derive, ultimately, from one's own intuitions. If it stems from another source, it is not genuinely experiential. Therefore, in order to understand the aesthetic and emotive qualities of the princess narrative, I had to allow my intuitions to influence my interpretation of the text. However, in doing so, I risked projecting culturally extraneous meanings onto it. Caught, as I was, between an intellectually accurate but experien-

12 I still do not know the answer to this question, although I believe Mr. Chickite perceived cosmological symbolism in the princess's movement through the house. On other occasions, when he told me about the significance of the number four in indigenous storytelling and religion, he mentioned "the four corners of the universe" as one of the quadripartite concepts in his belief system.

tially hollow Geertzian reading, and an intellectually imprecise but experientially rich reading along the lines of Stoller's approach, how was I to proceed?

In an attempt to balance these two approaches, I decided to revisit my intuitions regarding the aesthetic qualities of the text while aiming to remain within the hermeneutic boundaries that Mr. Chickite established when he explained the story to me. Using his explanation of the text, I felt equipped to evaluate critically my own aesthetic, experiential impressions of the princess narrative, asking to what extent these impressions corresponded to Mr. Chickite's intentions and to the meaning of the narrative within its cultural context. I planned to follow up on this critical evaluation by contemplating my aesthetic intuitions again within more refined hermeneutic boundaries, followed, in turn, by additional critical evaluation, etc. In this process of successive alternation[13] between intuitionist and critical perspectives on the text, I hoped that each phase of intuitive contemplation would add depth to the preceding segment of critical evaluation and that each phase of critical evaluation would add precision to the preceding segment of intuitive contemplation. I knew not to confuse this approach with a genuinely emic reading experience. All that my method would allow me to do is alternate, as a foreign textual ethnographer, between improving the emotional depth and the cognitive rigour of my interpretation. An emic reading to the text, by contrast, would involve integrating these hermeneutic goals and achieving them simultaneously, which I cannot do given my removal from the cultural underpinnings of the narrative.

I set this exegetical process in motion by allowing myself the freedom to form intuitive impressions of the text while "reading" it (i.e. listening to an audio-recording of it) with Mr. Chickite's explanation in mind. Although I knew that the story describes a theatrical ritual, I still found it surreal. Was this aesthetic impression faithful to the meaning of the narrative within its original cultural context? This is the question I attempted to answer during the subsequent critical, evaluative phase of my exegetical process. I developed the hypothesis that Mr. Chickite deliberately generated the surreal qualities I perceived in the text by juxtaposing images whose relationships to one another are not immediately apparent. I presumed that these aesthetic attributes might have had a specific function in the narrative, namely to blur the boundaries between the appearance and the reality of the ceremonial procedures that the story describes. Although I recognized that I could not expect ritual norms in 21st-century Cape Mudge to be the same as in late-19th-century Fort Rupert, I recalled one of Boas's statements regarding the essential role of illusion in the Winter Dances of the four Kwaguł tribes:[14]

> The name [of the Winter Ceremonial] is curious, for ts!äqa [the root of the word meaning "Winter Ceremonial"] means "to be fraudulent, to cheat." For instance, when a person wants to find out whether a shaman has real power or whether his power is based on pretence, he uses the term "pretended, fraudulent, made-up shaman."… Even in the most serious presentations of the ceremonial, it is clearly and definitely stated that it is planned as a fraud. [Boas 1966:172]

According to Boas, illusion is a core attribute of Winter Ceremonial practices, and the entire ritual complex is named for this feature. Goldman

13 I borrow directly from Geertz (1975:52-53) the methodological concept of successive alternation between two different hermeneutic lenses. Geertz describes

> a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring both into view simultaneously. In seeking to uncover the Javanese, Balinese, or Moroccan sense of self, one oscillates restlessly between the sort of exotic minutiae … that makes even the best ethnographies a trial to read and the sort of sweeping characterizations … that makes all but the most pedestrian of them somewhat implausible. Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts which actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole which motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one another.

I have quoted Geertz at length in order to make clear the extent to which my proposal regarding methodological alternation is indebted to his notion of "dialectical tacking." The difference between my approach and Geertz's is that whereas Geertz suggests alternating between localized and generalized perspectives on cultures, I suggest alternating between intellectual and experiential perspectives on texts. In this regard, I am also substantially influenced by Geertz's comments regarding the need to strike an appropriate balance between reliance on "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts when conducting "anthropological analysis" (Geertz 1975:48).

14 The following discussion is influenced by Wolf's (1999:109-110) similar summary of the history of scholarship on this issue, although I emphasize different aspects of Berman's work than Wolf does.

(1975:101-103) has revised Boas's observations regarding the importance of "fraud" in the Winter Ceremonial, positing an essentially Eliadean interpretation (see, e.g., Eliade 1971): the Kwakwaka'wakw use illusory performances to simulate supernatural events during their ritual proceedings because, in the post-mythic era, human relationships with spirits are no longer strong enough for genuine supernatural events to take place. As Goldman summarizes his position, "What was real then is simulated now" (Goldman 1975:103). However, Reid (1979:267-268) attributes more inherent significance to the concept of illusion. She suggests that when a young initiate into the Hamaċa dancing society (the highest-ranking ritual grade in the Winter Ceremonial) first becomes fully aware of the theatrical trickery that is involved in Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonialism, he gains the capacity to use winter rituals as "adaptable tools" for communication with society, rather than viewing these rites as rigid and immutable traditions (Reid 1979:267-268). Wolf, along similar lines, suggests that this rite of passage equips young chiefly initiates with "the political knowledge that it takes stage management to project reality" (1999:110).

Berman (1991) argues that mimesis plays more of a symbolic role in Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonialism. Kwakwaka'wakw ritual practices often involve simulating the behavior and appearance of animals and other spiritual beings by donning masks and other forms of disguise (see, e.g., Berman 2000:81-82; 1991:691-692). Interestingly, animals are believed to perform the Winter Ceremonial as well. Their ritual activities involve either putting on or removing their own masks (Berman 2000:73-74) (animals are believed to wear "masks" that give them their animal forms; when they are not wearing their masks, they look like humans [Berman 2000:63]). Berman discusses a text entitled "Night Hunter," in which a human hunter intrudes on a group of seals engaged in Winter Ceremonial performances. She notes, "fakery" in the winter dances was more than an attempt by the chiefs and nobles to overawe a gullible public. In "Night Hunter," it is the spirits themselves who are the "fakers," masking themselves in flesh and fur. In the human ċiċɛqa [Winter Ceremonial], chiefs are just "imitating" (nanaχċo) the spirits (Berman 1991:265).

Berman proposes that the spirits' ability to put on and remove their masks, alternating between human and animal forms and between the roles of predator and prey, is a major theme of the Winter Ceremonial, and that it is precisely this capacity for transformation that human participants in the Ceremonial strive to imitate (e.g. 1991:690-692). Accordingly, simulation is not, as Goldman suggests, a mere substitute for the supernatural realities that are depicted in Kwakwaka'wakw winter dance performances. Instead, the ritualized act of simulation, which is emically identified as such by the term ċiċɛqa (one of the titles for the Winter Ceremonial that means "illusions" [Berman 1991:264]) *is* the reality being depicted. Just as human dancers wear masks in order to look like spirits, spirits wear masks in order to look like themselves. When a human dancer puts on a mask, he or she is not just imitating a spirit's appearance; he or she is imitating the very act of donning a mask.

During my investigation of Mr. Chickite's narrative, these previous scholarly arguments led me to the hypothesis that the surreal qualities I sensed in the story might reflect attitudes toward illusion and its role in ritual that are similar to the attitudes Berman has identified in late-19th-century Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw discourse. In the narrative, Mr. Chickite repeatedly alludes to the fact that the ceremony he describes is a simulation, just as the word ċiċɛqa calls attention to the fact that Winter Ceremonial performances involve mimesis and illusion. Mr. Chickite notes, for example, that "No one, knew, that there was a maze in the four corners of the house" and that "they [the spectators] didn't know that there was a mannequin," highlighting the means by which the princess's death is simulated in the ritual performance. Yet, at the same time, he describes the events depicted in the performance as though they are truly taking place. When narrating the first "beheading" of the princess, for example, Mr. Chickite could have made clear that this act is merely a simulation by stating something along the lines of, "the chief chopped the head off of a mannequin, creating the illusion that he had beheaded his daughter." Or, he could have chosen to obscure the illusory quality of the act by saying, "the chief chopped off his daughter's head." Instead, Mr. Chickite recounts, "He [the chief] chopped her head

off, but they didn't know that there was a mannequin." The second half of this sentence acknowledges that the beheading is illusory by referring to the mannequin, but the first half of the sentence, understood literally, asserts that the princess truly was beheaded. Similarly, when describing the "burning" of the princess, Mr. Chickite states, "Then – they took her body, with a burnt seal – shoved it up underneath the, where the fire was, in a casket." The first half of the sentence refers explicitly to the seal, which is one of the props used to create the illusion of the daughter's death. However, in the second half of the sentence, the antecedent of the pronoun "it" (which refers to the object that is placed in the fire) is ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so. Grammatically speaking, the antecedent could be the "burnt seal," but it could also be "her [the princess's] body." A few sentences later, Mr. Chickite recounts, "People came to see her, while she was burnt alive." Even after mentioning the seal, Mr. Chickite describes the scene as though the princess is actually being burned.

I have suggested the possibility that in the princess narrative, Mr. Chickite deliberately skirts the boundary between illusion and reality in order to illustrate how these categories of experience are blended in a ceremonial context. However, several months after he shared this story with me, I heard him tell it again to another individual. Mr. Chickite and I were walking through the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, when a young woman politely approached him and asked several questions regarding his cultural heritage.[15] He used the princess narrative to help answer one of her questions. My impression was that this second rendition of the story did not exhibit the surreal stylistic qualities I had perceived in the first rendition.[16] It is possible that Mr. Chickite had different intentions each time he told the story, especially considering the different settings in which the respective performances took place (his living room vs. a museum). Consequently, it is conceivable that I was right to identify surreal qualities in his first rendition of the narrative, regardless of whether these qualities were present in his second rendition. However, after hearing him tell the story a second time, I was less confident in my interpretation of the initial telling. I assumed that Mr. Chickite and I would have many subsequent opportunities to discuss the princess narrative, so I did not rush to ask him further about it. Mr. Chickite passed away several months later. I have summarized my interpretation of his narrative in order to illustrate how intuitive-experiential and critical-analytic modes of exegesis can be combined in an attempt to understand foreign texts. However, without the chance to review my interpretation with Mr. Chickite, it remains highly speculative at best. I plan to discuss it with consultants who have a better grasp than I do of the culture-specific concepts underlying the story. Nevertheless, I cannot conclusively determine whether or how my intuitive impressions regarding the surreal qualities of the text correspond to the intentions of the author.

Conclusion

My goal in practicing textual ethnography is to listen quietly and humbly to how members of other cultures express themselves and their outlook on the world. In order to avoid projecting aspects of myself and of my own culture onto foreign texts, I attempt to maintain an appropriate level of detachment from the interpretive process. However, in order to gain an appreciation of texts' aesthetic, experiential power, I must allow myself to respond to the reading process on an intuitive, emotional level. Balancing between these two mandates is the core challenge of textual ethnography, and I hope that it will be a lifelong endeavour for me as a student of foreign cultures and their texts.

15 Previously, Mr. Chickite had led a tour group through the museum. The young woman had been a member of this group.

16 Because of the context in which Mr. Chickite delivered this second rendition of the narrative, I did not interrupt him to ask if I could audio-record his performance. Consequently, I cannot analyze this rendition in any detail, and I must proceed on the basis of my initial impressions.

REFERENCES

Alter, Robert
2011 The Art of Biblical Narrative. New York: Basic Books.

Auerbach, Erich
1953 Odysseus's Scar. In Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. Erich Auerbach, ed. Pp. 3-23. New York: Doubleday.

Ben-Amos, Dan
1976 Talmudic Tall Tales. In Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, and Felix J. Oinas, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Berman, Judith
1991 The seals' sleeping cave: The interpretation of Boas' Kwak'wala texts. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.
2000 Red Salmon and Red Cedar Bark: Another Look at the Nineteenth Century Kwakwaka'wakw Winter Ceremonial. B.C. Studies 125-126:53-98.

Boas, Franz
1935 Kwakiutl Tales: New Series, Part I – Translations. New York: Columbia University Press.
1943 Kwakiutl Tales: New Series, Part II – Texts. New York: Columbia University Press.
1966 Kwakiutl Ethnography. Helen Codere, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boas, Franz, Helene Boas Yampolsky, and Zellig S. Harris
1947 Kwakiutl Grammar with a Glossary of the Suffixes. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 37(3): 203-337.

Eliade, Mircea
1971 The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History. William R. Trask, trans. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Geertz, Clifford
1973 Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. In The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. Clifford Geertz, ed. Pp. 412-453. New York: Basic Books.
1975 On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding. American Scientist 63(1):47-53.

Goldman, Irving
1975 The Mouth of Heaven: An Introduction to Kwakiutl Religious Thought. Huntington: R. E. Krieger Pub. Co.

Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner
2000 The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, CD ROM Edition. Leiden: Brill.

Ortner, Sherry B.
1984 Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. Comparative Studies in Society and History 26(1):126-166.

Ramsey, Jarold
1977 The Wife Who Goes out like a Man, Comes Back as a Hero: The Art of Two Oregon Indian Narratives. PMLA 92(1):9-18.

Reid, Susan
1979 The Kwakiutl Man Eater. Anthropologica 21(2):247-275.

Stoller, Paul
2004 Stranger in the Village of the Sick: A Memoir of Cancer, Sorcery, and Healing. Boston: Beacon Press.

Waterman, T. T.
1914 The Explanatory Element in the Folk-Tales of the North-American Indians. The Journal of American Folklore 27(103):1-54.

Wolf, Eric
1999 Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis. Berkeley: University of California Press.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 19-33

Decolonizing Bioarchaeology: An Autoethnographic Reflection

Heather Robertson
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: Bioarchaeology, as it operates within the disciplines of archaeological consulting and academia, carries with it colonial undertones of scientific positivism that perpetuate certain scientific biases if gone unchallenged. These colonial biases in scientific exploration (e.g. whether or not to excavate ancestral remains, the treatment of ancestral remains post excavation, the research questions addressing ancestral human remains, and the source of the research questions) serve to erode relationships between the bioarchaeologist and the Indigenous communities whose duty it is to be stewards of ancestral remains. To challenge these colonial biases, we must first identify them. Autoethnography – a reflexive study of personal and professional experiences – can identify certain colonial biases of the bioarchaeologist. Analytical autoethnography – the contribution reflection has to the greater body of anthropological theory – can help improve the process of bioarchaeology, or decolonize bioarchaeology, by involving First Nations more completely in bioarcheological processes.

KEYWORDS: authoethnography, bioarchaeology, museums, repatriation

Introduction

This manuscript is a reflective look at my own experiences as a bioarchaeologist within the disciplines of consulting archaeology and academia in British Columbia (BC). The intent of these reflections is to encourage dialogues between bioarchaeologists, and more importantly, between bioarchaeologists and Indigenous populations on how bioarchaeology has been performed and can be performed among consulting archaeologist and academics in places with a colonial past. I am aware that my experiences reflect only a small view of bioarchaeology and does not account for those disciplines that are actively improving the practice of bioarchaeology within such places. It is in fact the existence of these practices, as evidence that rebuilding broken relationships between archaeology or bioarchaeology and Indigenous communities does serve to improve the research questions being asked that prompted this manuscript. I feel it is necessary to identify certain ideas and practices that could be detrimental to building relationships with Indigenous communities who have been, and continue to be, negatively impacted by colonialism, when performing bioarcheology. I must also mention that by doing so, it is not my intention to vilify the disciplines I reflect on in this manuscript. By challenging bioarchaeological ideas and practices that inadvertently or unintentionally recreate colonial divisions between the scientist and the object of study, in this case people, we come one step closer to changing those ideas and practices for the better. As change becomes more prominent, relationships can become stronger between the scientist and the subject, hopefully to a point where they are reciprocal. The exercise of reflecting and interpreting my own experiences was conducted using an autoethnographical approach.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a reflexive study of the ethnographer's experiences and subjectivity to highlight cultural and social realities hidden by the ethnographic method of silent observation (Marechal 2010; May 2011). It employs the researcher's own experiences as the ethnographic data. Authethnography is a response to the crisis of representation in ethnography: critiques of ethnographical representation of "the other" from a privileged Western perspectives and debates over the legitimacy of the "native voice" from indigenous ethnographers (Atkinson et al. 1999; Chang 2008; Marcus and Fischer 1999; May 2011). In ethnographies of the past and, some argue, of the present, the object of study becomes exoticized through the ethnographer's position of objective observation and interpretation of "the other" through typically Western scientific, analytical, and philosophical lenses (Ellis et al. 2011; Marcus and Fischer 1999). The argument against this traditional method of ethnography is that exoticized observations generate misrepresentations of "the other" due to the observer's cultural and interpretive biases. The postmodern critique of ethnographies that misrepresent "the other" question whether Western anthropologists have the legitimate cultural knowledge, and therefore the authority, to represent "the other" academically, and to generalize the social realities that come from those observations (Ellis et al. 2011; Marcus and Fischer 1999). The postmodern critiques of ethnographic research insist that ethnographies should be multi-vocal, self-reflexive, experimental, and self-critical, focusing on the moment of ethnographic research and on the stories told (Atkinson et al. 1999).

In contrast to traditional ethnography, autoethnography focuses the observer's "attention on the relationship of the self to the world that is investigated" (Dunphinee 2010:806) and by doing so conveys the informant's otherwise silent voice and perspective in the account of the observation (Doloriert and Sambrook 2012). It is also a tool for exploring the mundane and the events or actions that could be taken for granted, thereby allowing for a theoretical or analytical movement into hegemonic discourses (Doloriert and Sambrook 2012). The practice of "autoethnography" as opposed to artful "story telling" adds a layer of scholarship and legitimacy to the histories or narratives being shared (Dunphinee 2010). The goal of autoethnography is not to "become a detached spectator" (Ellis and Bochner 2006:431) but to be an active participant in the narrative. Autoethnography brings ethnography back to itself reflexively by shifting the ethnographer's position of observation away from "the distanced and detached observer and toward the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement, and embodied participation" (Ellis and Bochner 2006:433-4), in what Marcus and Fisher (1999:111) describes as "repatriating anthropology."

For qualitative analyst Arthur Bochner, autoethnography is more than just a change in the ethnographic methodology; it is also a movement away from traditional theorizing within the discipline of anthropology towards a practice of narrative inquiry. Bochner's shift to narrative inquiry is derived from a reaction to "the excesses and limitations of theory-driven, empiricist social science" (2005:55). According to Bochner, the practice of theorizing, in any social science discipline, does not get to the details of human experience – this is accomplished better through narrative. Narratives are aids to understanding larger questions of what connects us as a collective humanity and what distinguish us as individuals. "The narrative inquiry is a response to … a desire to do meaningful work" (Bochner 2005:55) but meaningful to whom: the anthropologist; other people; the world? How does Bochner's atheoretical approach to autoethnography further the discipline of anthropology and our understanding of humanity and culture in a way that is not provided by other literary formats?

I argue that, if autoethnography is producing meaningful work, the benefits must be reflected in the discipline: autoethnography must contribute to the comprehension and evolution of anthropological theory. Other authors echo my sentiments in their critiques of autoethnography as "being unrepresentative and lacking objectivity" (Marechal 2010:47). Atkinson and colleagues (1999) have emphasized that although autoethnography incorporates theories and philosophies of epistemology and postmodernism, it should be executed within a scientific

methodological framework: formulating a research question, collecting data, controlling for biases, and evaluating that data. Without a base in positivism, autoethnographies becomes stories for stories' sake rather than a means of using the knowledge gleaned from those stories to further the understanding of humanity, culture, and society. Ethnography "has never been a stable entity" as Atkinson and colleagues (1999:466) describe it. It constantly re-evaluates itself and continually seeks hidden voices for developing a holistic understanding of culture and society. However, the current argument is that the benefits of autoethnography: repositioning the observer to de-exoticize "the other," outweighs its limited contributions to the body of anthropological theory (Ellis and Bochner 2006).

If autoethnography is a useful ethnographic method, can it be applied as an analytical tool in other fields of anthropology such as bioarchaeology? Although bioarchaeological methods are rooted in positivism, there is a demand within the scientific method to control biases either within the data or within the researcher. Autoethnography could be the means to identify the researcher's hidden biases that limit bioarchaeological research design or interpretation. There is a movement to expand the body of bioarchaeology theory: exploring ideas of gender, materiality, social meaning, life histories and lived experiences of individuals to create "social bioarchaeology" (Barrett and Blakey 2011; Hollimon 2011; Littleton 2011; Roberts 2011; Sofaer 2006, 2011; Stutz 2008). Autoethnography has the potential to contribute to the development of these and other social bioarchaeological theories by bringing the lived experiences of the researcher into the interpretation of human osteology and archaeology as a kind of phenomenological approach. I will attempt to demonstrate how autoethnography can uncover colonial biases of bioarchaeology, not in the methods used, but in the way Western scientific pursuits are positioned over the desires and rights of descendant or heritage communities to hold autonomy over their ancestral remains, by examining my experiences as a colonial biased bioarchaeologist. With many bioarchaeologists involved in the social vs. scientific debate over repatriation, autoethnography can delve deeper into uncovering how archaeological excavation and repatriation of ancestral human remains affect descendent or heritage communities and how excavation and repatriation affect relationships between Indigenous communities and the scientific community studying the remains(Buikstra 2006; Turner and Andrushko 2011; Ubelaker and Grant, 1989). This introspection will also seek to find a way forward for bioarchaeologists and Indigenous communities to first negotiate colonial biases and second seek to find common ground within their differing perspectives.

I find Anderson's (2006) description of analytical autoethnography to be the most compelling and useful autoethnographical method not only for contributing to the body of anthropological theory but also for its application to other fields of anthropology such as bioarchaeology. I will use his criteria in the analysis of my experience repatriating ancestral human remains in British Columbia. According to Anderson (2006), an analytic autoethnographic method involves five criteria: first, the researcher must be a complete member of the group under study. I fit this first criterion as a bioarchaeologist who has participated in repatriations. Second, the researcher must participate in analytic reflexivity. The readers will judge my success in this for themselves. Third, the researcher's self must be visible in the narrative. As these are my narratives, I will be visible in them. Fourth, there must be a dialogue with other informants beyond the self. It is difficult for me to meet this criterion fully. While I will be introducing dialogues with others, because this is a retrospective autoethnography, these dialogues will be a reconstruction from memory rather than a reproduction of what was said. Finally, the autoethnography must be committed to theoretical analysis. This will occur in the discussion section of this manuscript. To borrow from Marcus and Fischer (1999), this manuscript will attempt to "repatriate" an anthropological retrospective into bioarchaeology through the experiences of a bioarchaeologist involved in the excavation and repatriation of ancestral remains from specific examples within two different disciplines of archaeology in British Columbia, Canada, with the intent to highlight colonial biases.

Bioarchaeology

Bioarchaeological Methods

Bioarchaeology, or the study of ancestral remains in an archeological context, is an important field for understanding not only how individuals and populations lived and died in the past, but also for understanding large scale events in human history (e.g. war, migration) and societal behaviours (e.g. treatment of diseases, death) (Buikstra 2006; Sofaer 1996, 2011; Ubelaker and Grant 1989). There are presently many methods used to study ancestral remains directly that reveal different kinds of information about deceased individuals. These analyses are largely broken down into either rudimentary or more detailed, and sometimes destructive, studies of ancestral remains, which are used by two disciplines of bioarchaeology: archaeological consulting and academia.

Bioarchaeological analysis at a rudimentary level involves inventorying all bone elements recovered, determining the minimum number of individuals present, assessing their age and sex, and documenting and describing cultural modifications, morphological variants, non-metric traits, and pathologies (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). This level of analysis is useful for developing a basic mortuary profile or demographic of the population, and for determining whether there are patterns of disease or activity among sexes or across age groups. An experienced bioarchaeologist can perform this level of analysis quickly in the field with minimal equipment. Archaeological consulting typically stops at the rudimentary level of bioarchaeological analysis.

Academic institutions also conduct rudimentary levels of analysis, but are generally better equipped for and employ more detailed levels of bioarchaeological analysis that include osteometric measurements, pathology diagnoses (as opposed to description and documentation), high-resolution tooth casts for scanning electron microscopy, and radiography. This level of analysis is useful for understanding the specific life-history of an individual including relative health (periods of disease and healing), traumatic events, and/or physical activity, which provide insight into individual biocultural behaviours (Joyce 2005; Ortner 2003; Pearson and Buikstra 2006; Sofaer 2006; Tung 2012). Bioarchaeological analyses that require destructive testing such as ancient DNA studies, stable isotope analysis, histology, and cross-sectional geometry can provide specific information for analyses of biodistance, diet, and disease, which can tell us about the movement of an individual or populations across landscapes. Bioarchaeology has the potential to uncover complex individual and population histories that can tell us about migration, gendered behaviours, social practices, or interpersonal conflicts.

One could generalize that archaeological consulting and academia, could have different perspectives as to whose needs should take precedence, the scientists' or the community's, with regards to ancestral remains, not because of the limitations or facilitations placed on them by the methods they use, but because of the proximity these disciplines have to descendant communities who encourage archaeologists and bioarchaeologists to engage in self-reflexive practices that identify colonial internal biases. The result of this self-reflection is the creation of different sets of bioarchaeological practices and points of view regarding the importance of bioarchaeology within these organizations. I have had the opportunity and pleasure of working in both archaeological consulting and academia in a bioarchaeological capacity and have noted how these organizations generate different perceptions as to how to practice bioarchaeology and its importance in BC archaeology.

Drawing from my own knowledge, interpretations, and documented descriptions where possible I will outline how archaeological consulting and academia view the importance of bioarchaeology in BC archaeology differently, how First Nation perspectives are integrated into the practice of bioarchaeology within the two disciplines, and what bioarchaeological perspectives have emerged within the disciplines based on their practices. The indigenous and bioarchaeological perspectives presented are reconstructed narratives based on discussions, interactions, and experiences I have had with other people. The use of quotation marks in the following sections will indicate dialogue rather than direct quotations.

Why Bioarchaeology?

Within consulting archaeology, First Nations representatives and the archaeologists agree to the protocol for treatment of ancestral remains prior to excavation. In effect, the communities likely descended from the remains largely determine the extent, or absence of bioarchaeological analysis. As First Nations in BC began asserting political and territorial sovereignty on the lands modified by development and archaeology, it prompted a change to the province's Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) requiring consultation with First Nations in the design and implementation of archaeological excavations (Budhwa 2005; Nicholas 2006). Although the Act does not recognize First Nations as owners of archaeological material, the 1994 amendment prompted a greater mandate among consulting archaeologists to involve indigenous communities in the process of consulting archaeology (Klassen 2008). This mandate not only changed the way consulting archaeology was practiced and mediated in BC but it also changed the way bioarchaeology was practiced in the industry.

Prior to the mandated change, consulting archaeologists followed several different practices when faced with ancestral remains. During archaeological impact assessment, excavations or archaeological surveys, ancestral human remains were noted, mapped, and removed from their location to be analysed at an academic institution (Condrashoff 1971; Mitchell 1967; Sanger 1962). Occasionally arrangements were made with local First Nation communities to return the ancestral remains to the place they were excavated from after rudimentary analysis (Cybulski 1975; Eldridge, 1978; Johnson Fladmark 1973). Other archaeologists left the ancestral remains *in situ* (in the original place) and conducted a minimal analysis (Howe 1981; Lawhead 1980). After 1995, more and more archaeological reports describe remains either being left *in situ* with no osteological analysis conducted or left *in situ* with minimal analysis (analysis of Provincial Archaeological Reports conducted for a report on repatriations in British Columbia, results not yet published). Few archaeological excavations that encountered ancestral material post-1994 recovered the material for osteological analysis and even fewer retained the material after analysis was complete. The majority of ancestral remains excavated for analysis were returned to the location they were recovered from by the time the reports were written.

The change in bioarchaeological practices in BC consulting archaeology post 1994 is most likely the result of involving First Nation communities in archaeological projects who could then communicate their preferred treatment of ancestral remains at archaeological sites. Indigenous involvement at the level of excavation provided an opportunity for information sharing between descendant or heritage communities and the archaeologists and bioarchaeologists. Consequently, bioarchaeologists were more sympathetic to the desires of First Nation communities regarding the treatment of ancestral remains. The precedent set by archaeological consultants of involving Indigenous peoples in the recovery of ancestral remains means the wellbeing of the ancestors are back again in the control of the descendants.

In museums or academic institutions, bioarchaeologists have less direct contact with the interests of local First Nation communities and are less likely to experience the impact colonial biases have on descendants. I do recognize that some academic and museum institutions incorporate the interests of Indigenous communities into the design and outcome of research projects, but these are rare and by no means as prevalent as it is in consulting archaeology in BC. The result is there is a more diffused transfer of knowledge and information from Indigenous communities to the bioarchaeologists that may or may not have a direct impact on the practice of bioarchaeology in museums or academia. One example of how the interests of local First Nations communities have addressed colonial bioarchaeological biases is in repatriation.

In the wake of the Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) that passed in the USA in 1990, American museums (except for the Smithsonian Institution) were legally obligated to take inventories of their collection of ancestral remains and provide them to Indigenous groups from whose lands the material was excavated (Buikstra 2006; Ubelaker 2006). Because American museum collections were now visible to Indigenous groups, repatriation requests were made quickly. In response

to NAGPRA, Canadian academic institutions began the movement to reclaim Indigenous culture and history (Ewing 2011; Walker 2000). Canadian museums and academic institutions where called upon to prepare their curated human remains for repatriation. Generally speaking, rudimentary analysis and non-destructive testing including photography, radiography, casting, and osteometrics made up the extent of osteological analysis prior to repatriation. Some bioarchaeologists, particularly those who do not have direct exposure to the desires or experiences of descendant communities before, during, or after the repatriation process, feel that reburial of ancestral remains after only a rudimentary analysis, without ancient DNA or isotopic data, which are destructive techniques, is extremely limiting (Buikstra 2006). They position the scientific colonial biases over the experiences of descendant communities as colonized and marginalized people. As a scientist and a colonizer, I can understand the reasons for this positioning but at the same time I also see the dangers such a position can have when trying to develop meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. The study of ancestral remains in BC and North America in general can provide insight into the history of early human occupation and migration into the continent and identify the impact colonialism has had on the physical stress, disease prevalence, the relative health of the skeletal body of Indigenous communities (Ubelaker and Grant 1989). However, until bioarchaeologists are exposed to the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous communities, they cannot identify the colonial biases surrounding the pursuit of bioarchaeological knowledge at the expense of Indigenous skeletal bodies, or against the wishes of descendant communities.

Special agreements between First Nations and bioarchaeologists have permitted destructive testing of ancestral remains for ancient DNA and stable isotope analysis, however, these are rare and stem from longstanding relationships between the particular Indigenous community who control access to the remains and the bioarchaeologist (Cybulski et al. 2007). Engaging in meaningful investigations of their ancestors and life-histories, is an example of what can happen when control of ancestral remains is turned over to descendant communities. In other areas, Indigenous communities and academic institutions agreed that the institutions could become stewards of ancestral remains if they followed cultural protocols for storing and studying ancestral remains. By creating strong relationships with descendant communities, bioarchaeologists in academic settings may experience the transfer of knowledge experienced by consulting bioarchaeologists to challenge colonial biases.

First Nations Perspectives

The experiences I have had connecting with First Nation perspectives and learning about cultural practices particularly concerning the treatment of and behaviours around ancestral remains began with my first archaeological field school in 1998. From the moment I learned about archaeology and archaeological perspectives, I realized the interconnectedness of archaeology and First Nation perspectives on ancestral remains. This could only have been accomplished because of the political environment in which I began my bioarchaeological career, in the wake of the precedence set after HCA and NAGPRA. I have experienced only a handful of First Nations perspectives that I will endeavour to synthesize in this section of the manuscript. These accounts by no means represent a general perspective on ancestral remains by First Nations, but they are the perspectives I am familiar with and are the ones that have influenced my point of view of ancestral remains as a bioarchaeologist.

There is a connection between the living and the ancestors that reaffirms the First Nation connection to place, time, and to all others. Ubelaker and Grant (1989) write that the spiritual connection of living descendants and ancestral remains continues to be strong after hundreds and even thousands of years. I have witnessed this connection myself while working on a large archaeological project where human remains were encountered. We had representatives from seven different First Nations communities participate as archaeologists and as liaisons to their community regarding our activities and finds. When the human remains were uncovered, a medicine woman came to perform a brushing off ceremony for

the whole crew and a food burning ceremony for the ancestors. The brushing off ceremony was to remove spirits who might have attached themselves to the living and the food offering was performed because it is the duty of the living to care for the remains of the ancestors and to show respect for the ancestors who have been physically and spiritually disturbed by the archaeological excavation. One could say that spiritual connections were being made between the living and the ancestors, as one of the crew began dreaming about an unknown boy child after she encountered the remains of a young individual from the site. Another example of the connections between the living and the dead (or between the dead and the living) was in the half-hearted jocular explanations for why three women from the crew became pregnant during the excavation. Although no one seriously contended that the women who became pregnant were carrying the spirits of the ancestors they encountered (or who encountered the women), there seemed to be an unspoken worry behind each joker's eyes that the site might be spiritually potent.

Connections were established between the living (both native and non-native) and the dead initially through the physical unearthing of human remains from the earth and then spiritually through historical memory and memory making. For the crew of First Nations, the presence of the ancestors reaffirmed their historical memory of deep antiquity to the place we were all standing in. These memories were enacted in the dreams of some individuals and in the songs learned by each new generation, played out for us all to witness. For the non-native crew (and I speak mostly for myself), the presence of the ancestral remains brought forward my awareness of colonial memory. New memories were also being created, however, that superseded any negative historical memories. Jokes, mutual teasing, spiritual discussions, shared ritual enactments, and knowledge exchange helped to bridge the divide between two distinct reactions to ancestral remains. The dead made possible a new connection between the living people surrounding them, new memories to be made of that place, and new perceptions toward them through an exchange of knowledge.

In repatriation ceremonies I have witnessed the strong emotional connection living First Nations have with the ancestral remains being repatriated. During one intimate repatriation ceremony involving the Nicomen, descendants were visibly moved, in tears, and overcome with emotion at the reunion with their ancestors. It was explained to me (I cannot remember the source, but the message was received) that First Nations do not distinguish between ancestors who have died recently and ancestors who died millennia ago. Time does not erode connectivity; time reaffirms connections. Familial ties are created, maintained, and validated through the connection with the land or the territory. Because these ancestors were removed from an area within their territory, they are Nicomen ancestors, and should be subjected to the cultural protocols warranted by the Nicomen.

Bioarchaeological Perspectives

My bioarchaeological perspectives have been created through my experiences and reflections as an undergraduate student, a laboratory technician in the Archaeology Department at Simon Fraser University, a consulting archaeologist, and a graduate student. I am equipped with osteological and technological knowledge to document ancestral remains adequately and a theoretical reflection that recognizes the historical particularism of my situation. I am a white academic who has been in a position of fiduciary caretaker for ancestral remains unearthed prior to the incorporation of First Nations communities in decision-making processes. However, my ethnographical perspective and sociological self benefited most from my involvement in the practice of consulting archaeology and repatriation. Out of these influences I hope to be a voice for an increased understanding of the phenomenological aspect of bioarchaeology in both the academic and archaeology consulting organizations, particularly when the perspectives of the bioarchaeologists clash with those of descendant communities.

My own personal frame of mind when conducting an analysis of ancestral remains, be it radiography, photography, or inventory can be described as peaceful, quiet, and often apologetic. I could have said, "I am always respectful of the remains" as I have heard most other human osteologists say, but I am often

struck by the question "what does that actually mean?" As one might suppose, these mean different things to different people. For some, being "respectful" means they would treat the remains as well as any other specimen they have encountered. They are careful and precise as they handle, document, and measure the specimen, and this is in fact behaving in a "respectful" manner from a bioarchaeological perspective because they are not abusing the specimen – knocking it about or letting it fall off the table and break.

For many Indigenous communities the simple fact that remains are in a museum is enough to be considered disrespectful treatment of the ancestors (Ubelaker and Grant 1989). To keep ancestral remains in a cardboard box without cedar, ochre, smudging, or ritual feeding is to deny the ancestors their cultural rights and perpetuates the scientific and colonial dominion over Indigenous bodies. Some academic institutions have attempted to change the colonial structure of museums and osteological storage by incorporating cultural practices of ancestral stewardship, by such things as routine smudging of the osteological storage room, laying cedar bows in the boxes of remains, wrapping remains in blankets, or placing the remains in cedar boxes.

I therefore do not say, "I am respectful of the remains," which I do in a bioarchaeological perspective, but cannot guarantee in a First Nations perspective as much as I would like to. When I am working with ancestral remains, I often find myself humming or playing music softly to not only quiet my mind for the task but also to create a peaceful environment in which to work. If I do accidently bump or drop a bone I cringe and apologize aloud. I am confessing this with the confidence that the reader will not think less of me for doing so, accidents happen, and it would be irresponsible of me to make you think otherwise in this narrative. I prefer talking aloud or thinking aloud, in a quiet voice, because it keeps me calm and I feel it keeps the energy in the room calm. Upon reflection, "the energy in the room" is quite a Western way of saying "spirits." For better or worse, I do believe in "energy" or "spirits," but not in a Cowardly Lion mantra kind of way, placating evil "spooks"; or provoking spirits to "show themselves" as in the TV show *Ghost Adventures*, but as a recognition that all things are energy and energy can be changed and exchanged between objects. My attempt at negotiating between Western science and an undefined spirituality that I am happy with influences my perspective and behaviour as a bioarchaeologist.

I found myself confronted with my perception of "energy" during the preparations for the Nicomen repatriation. The preparation consisted of a visit from a medicine woman and her brother to inform and prepare the remains spiritually for reburial. The introductions and interactions between the lab manager (my boss), the medicine woman, her brother, and me were very polite, cordial, and pleasant. The diligence of the medicine woman's brother to memorize our names – "Scottish Heather and the River Shannon" – humbled me. I am notoriously poor at remembering names, and embarrassed when I must ask someone's name several times before I remember it. I have since forgotten both of their names, and probably did not commit them to memory at our first meeting. However, I remember their faces, manners, and more importantly their contribution to my perception of the relationships between bioarchaeologists and descendant communities during repatriation. Particularly because many of our perceptions and opinions differed.

Our interactions consisted of the medicine women contacting the spirits of the ancestors by holding a portion of the remains in her hand. She proceeded to identify the remains as male, female, parent, child, as my boss and I went through the skeletal inventory. Looking back on this interaction between spiritual medium and scientist I am glad and somewhat surprised that her exchanges were received congenially and not with more resistance. I had heard stories after the fact where conflicts where felt between scientist and medium during similar events. I use the term "felt" because repatriation ceremonies are treated with such respect from both parties that I do not think anyone would engage in a verbal disagreement with beliefs. However, I am sure that both parties felt internal arguments, comments, or contradictions when confronted with ideas, terms, or perspectives that differ from our own. For example, the medium and the scientist were respectful of each

other's opinions regarding the identity of the ancestors. However, I confess my scientific curiosity was piqued and I wanted to see how the two methods of identifying individuals compared to each other, not in the sense that one method could "correctly identify" the individuals while the other could not, but rather what were the incidences of individuals being similarly identified between the two methods. However, I realized the impolitic implications of such a request, because I believed that I would offend the non-scientist if I requested a scientific comparison of her gift to my method (even though I thought it would be good fun), so I kept quiet.

I held my tongue in one other instance where the medicine woman began to tell me of her experience communing with ancestral remains and came across an alien skull among them, which caught me completely off guard. At the time, my inner scientist recalled details of cranial head shaping on the Northwest Coast, hydrocephaly (water in the brain) that expands and misshapes the skull of infants, other random pathologies that affect the shape of the skull and facial bones, and even natural distortion of the skull from the pressure of the burial environment that would discredit her perception. Not to mention the scores of unlikely scenarios that would compel an alien to become comingled with human remains. Again, I felt it would be discourteous to recite these aloud to her. So instead, I quieted my inner scientist, quelled the childhood fears of aliens from watching too many science fiction movies at a tender and impressionable age, and looked down at my inventory sheet and said "Oh yes? That's interesting." This interaction made me the most uncomfortable, and it was completely unrelated to the repatriation process.

Perhaps it was because she had inadvertently struck a nerve that triggered my deepest and most persistent fear. Alternatively, perhaps it was because out of all the insights she seemed to share with us, this one was the one I could not validate either scientifically or spiritually. I am quite open-minded when it comes to spirits, mediums, and unexplained insight, more so than is probably tolerated among the scientific community. I have had my own experience as a consulting archaeologist while working alone and in the same room as ancestral remains who were treated according to the cultural protocols of the First Nation representatives - wrapped in blankets and covered with cedar. I "heard" heavy breathing in my left ear. I could have explained the phenomenon as some trick of my own overactive imagination or some kind of pressure buildup and release my ear, but instead I chose to attribute it to something supernatural. Nevertheless, for whatever reason I cannot scientifically argue for the possibility of extraterrestrial lifeforms contacting humans. And yet, I can freely admit to playing music and talking aloud to "energy" that no one has perceived but me when I probably should be describing my own biochemical reactions to stress or other psychosomatic phenomena. If I was as afraid of spirits as I am of aliens, would it shape my perception of working with ancestral remains differently? Would it be accurate to say that both positive and negative experiences shape bioarchaeological perceptions? Is it because I have experienced First Nations spirituality in conjunction with archaeological scholarship that I perceive these concepts concurrently and positively? Naturally, this is anecdotal, but it is important to question the creation of perceptions among bioarchaeologists in relation to ancestral remains in order to influence processes that contribute to anthropological theory.

Repatriation is a path for academia to develop relationships with Indigenous communities. It forces the two groups together and provides the arena for political struggles to occur. Now this sounds particularly combative and violent, and I do not mean it in a negative way, but some kind of challenge must be made (i.e. challenging colonial mind frames) in order to make the confrontation meaningful (confrontation between scientific and cultural perceptions). Now I certainly do not feel that all repatriation events are or need to be confrontational, but negotiations are always a factor and there is usually a champion. In the situation of repatriation, there can be different kinds of champion. Descendant communities who have successfully repatriated ancestral remains curated across the Western world throughout the centuries are certainly champions. Less politically mobile communities who manage to locate and repatriate a handful of their ancestors are champions. Academic institutions that have voluntarily contacted com-

munities and initiated repatriation are champions. Communities who come together to make academic institutions stewards of ancestral remains and successfully outline and implement cultural and research protocols make champions of both parties. Ultimately, the path to dialogue between parties must be engaged in order to learn from one another and allow differing opinions to meet somewhere in the middle.

My perceptions of repatriation have two sources. I have participated in two repatriation ceremonies that were both quite different in size, political motive, and connection with the repatriation process. My first repatriation ceremony was SFU's involvement with the national and international call from the Haida to repatriate all ancestral remains excavated and removed from Haida Gwaii. The ceremony at SFU was very large and involved a lot of planning not so much from the Archaeology Department but from the University itself. The entire university was welcome to the event, which was a showcase of Haida culture, tradition, and above all, political sovereignty, over the repatriated materials. I do not really remember much from the event. I snuck in late because I had work duties to finish before heading over to the event with my supervisor. There were speeches, songs, and dances that I did not really get an opportunity to see or hear. I recognized that this event was important for the Haida people to convey their political strength and cultural sovereignty over the materials being repatriated to an audience largely made up of colonizers. The message was a clear and important one, however, they were speaking largely to those who were already supporters of their movement. The attendees did not need much convincing that this was the right thing to do and for me, the pomp and ceremony of the event only succeeded in reminding me of my colonial past, polishing up the already lustrous yoke that is the "white man's burden." I came away from that event with a kind of cheerful depression. I was glad I could be a part of a larger structure of reconciliation in some small way, however, I was burdened by the thought of how much further colonizers and First Nations had to travel to change these feelings of obligated political positioning in both dominant and submissive poses. At least most of us seem to be on this road together.

The second repatriation ceremony I attended was vastly different from the Haida repatriation. The Nicomen repatriation, which I was greatly involved with, was far more intimate, personal, and emotive. This repatriation event occurred in a small room in the Archaeology Department. The event was more intimate and only those people who worked directly on or in connection with the repatriation attended the event: the chair of the department, my supervisor, me, and of course the Nicomen representatives. Before the Nicomen were expected to arrive, I remember the small meeting my supervisor and I had together. She, in a quiet voice, relayed to me some instructions about what I could do while she and the department chair spoke directly with the representatives. The Archaeology Department had provided some light refreshments for the event as the Nicomen representatives were traveling a great distance for the repatriation. She asked would I make sure the elders had something to eat and drink, that they were comfortable and provided for.

I remember being a bit nervous - with the memory of the Haida repatriation running through my mind, I did not know what to expect for this one. I also remember the other departmental participants started to get nervous when the scheduled time for the Nicomen representatives to arrive came and then went. Phone calls were being made, no one could be reached, and all I could do was watch people scurry around while I helped by not getting in their way. Finally, one truck full of representatives arrived. I do not really remember the reason why they were late, but I remember one of the representatives coming into the Archaeology Department, apologized for being late, and said something about "Indian time." The second carload of representatives was still to come. When they arrived, we began. The emotions of the Nicomen representatives were expressed openly – sadness, grief, relief – and although I did not feel quite prepared for it, the informality of the proceedings put me more at ease and quelled my nervousness, so I could react in a calmer way to offer tissues, a chair, a glass of water. I offered my sympathies in stillness in the far corner of the room, head bowed, hands folded: a quiet witness to the events that unfolded before me.

Discussion

The perceptions my experiences in the disciplines of consulting archaeology and repatriation have created, outline a disconnect between bioarchaeological scientific biases and the perspectives of descendant Indigenous communities towards ancestral remains. This disconnect might be more apparent among academic institutions that do not have direct associations with descendant Indigenous groups. Without direct contact with Indigenous perceptions, bioarchaeologists will not have the opportunity to engage with their own Western scientific and colonial point of reference. By turning the gaze inward bioarchaeologists can begin to position themselves away from the seat of authority to develop a dialogue between themselves and descendant communities. Bioarchaeologists within consulting archaeology can build positive relationships with First Nation communities because of the close connections made by having First Nations representation at during the archaeological process. Even before an excavation is underway, bioarchaeologists and First Nations can discuss what to do when ancestral remains are found, whether to excavate or not, what the cultural protocols should be during and post-excavation, and what kinds of analyses would communities most like to be performed. This kind of early relationship building, if done collaboratively, makes room for communities to exercise their autonomy over the ancestors found. At a deeper level, if the relationship building with consulting bioarchaeologist is executed with the understanding that communities have authority over ancestral remains, First Nations autonomy is not only exercised, but also legitimized. Archaeologists and bioarchaeologists need to be understanding of the situation that a community can and should declare their autonomy over the treatment and analysis of ancestral remains at the expense of "scientific interests" because it is their right to do so. Bioarchaeologists are also anthropologists because we study people directly, and as such, we should be compelled to evaluate critically the behaviours and perceptions of our discipline that are taken for granted especially when operating in a colonial environment.

Recognizing Indigenous authority over ancestral human remains is a direct challenge to the academic authority of bioarchaeologists. My experience is that many practicing archaeologists and academics are afraid that handing that authority over fully will end the study of ancestral remains in BC or limit it more than it is already. However, I think the challenge is necessary to refocus the biological and scientific perception of human remains towards a more phenomenological realization that ancestors physically tie people to the landscape through time in the eyes of descendant communities. People transformed by colonialism should receive the most thoughtfully reflexive opinions and actions from their colonizer compatriots, especially if those colonizers have embedded themselves in the anthropological discipline. Bioarchaeologists in academia are willing to engage with the autonomy of Indigenous peoples when repatriation of ancestral remains is requested; however, this is often the only interactions academic bioarchaeologists will have with the wishes of Indigenous communities regarding their ancestors. There are a few incidences of successful interactions between academic bioarchaeologists and Indigenous communities, which resulted in a change in the way ancestral remains are stored in repositories, providing access for regular cleansing of the area and for offerings to the ancestors. However, disciplines can take this relationship further by requesting cultural protocols from communities for handling the remains when not in storage. The practice of following cultural protocols help to demonstrate outwardly a respect for ancestral remains, focuses the mind of the bioarchaeologist on their task, or situates oneself spiritually in a place of calmness.

Another way to demonstrate outwardly a respect for ancestral remains is by elevating their current precedence within academia. Requests for repatriation tend to be the major incentive for bioarchaeological analysis and documentation within academia and osteological collections devoid of community activism tend to fall to a low priority within institutions with limited funding. Often, when osteological collections are not a priority, analysis and documentation are delayed for a very long time or the analytical process is limited to documentation only. By elevating the academic perception of ancestral remains from "material" to agents of connectivity as propagated by

Indigenous perception, analysis and documentation could take on a different level of importance, to facilitate repatriations quickly when requested. Better still, academia could instigate communication with Indigenous communities requesting the community's recommendations, insights, or involvement with their ancestors. This might result in a repatriation request or in an agreement of stewardship, but ultimately the decision must come from communities, and institutions should invite them to the table if the communities are not already seeking them out.

Bioarchaeological theory is developing roots in social theory as "social bioarchaeology." This is advantageous because it brings together social-anthropological theory and bioarchaeological methods to provide a biocultural understanding of ancestral remains. The structure of positivism is essential to generate reproducible methods in all archaeological, bioarchaeological, and even anthropological methods, because objectivity and rigorous data collection form the basis for logical interpretations and reproducible methods allow for the comparison between results. However, a more critical stance of a positivistic bioarchaeology should address "why" bioarchaeological studies take place and who will benefit from the knowledge collected, particularly when working within a colonial environment. Bioarchaeology can be colonial when the goals of scientific discovery are obtained at the expense and imposition of Indigenous communities, creating an imbalance of power. Addressing why bioarchaeology should be done and who benefits from the data in either the context of consulting archeology or an academic-led excavation could generate decolonizing forms of bioarchaeology by inviting Indigenous communities to determine the research goals that would interest them. Decolonizing bioarchaeology would require the engagement and involvement of descendent communities in multiple stages of bioarchaeology, from generating pertinent research questions that reflect what communities wish to know about their ancestors, to incorporating Indigenous cultural protocols into the pre-, during, and post-excavation processes. Engaging in bioarchaeology in this way will confront certain colonial biases regarding the practice of studying ancestral remains and how it awakens structural violences and social suffering among descendant communities (Kleinman 1997).

Archaeological and bioarchaeological approaches in both consulting archaeology and academia should carefully consider the vulnerabilities created by the structural violence and social suffering of Indigenous people in not only BC but also elsewhere in other colonial contexts. Colonial bioarchaeology can take on many incarnations and degrees depending on the political autonomy of the descendant community and the bioarchaeological protocols of the consulting company or the academic institution. However, decolonized bioarchaeology can be demonstrable by including descendant communities in decisions made in all aspects concerning ancestral remains. I feel that BC has attempted decolonizing approaches to bioarchaeology with varying degrees of success in both consulting, and academic processes of bioarchaeology, but I also believe that a stronger commitment can be made to make room for Indigenous perspectives particularly where those perspectives negate those of bioarchaeologists. It is vital to bring communities into the anthropological, archaeological, and bioarchaeological processes to help shape the perspectives of the anthropologist in sympathy to the communities under study, and by doing so challenge the scientific positivism that determines bioarchaeological practices in colonial environments. Decolonizing bioarchaeology is how trust could be rebuilt between bioarchaeologists and descendant communities who were, and are, marginalized by colonial bioarchaeology, allowing both sides to learn from each other and to contribute to the growth of the human experience.

Conclusion

I have reflected that bioarchaeology can be at times colonial or nonreflexive to the scientific biases that drive the study of ancestral remains. Scientific biases combined with the fear that consultation with descendant communities will limit or negate bioarchaeological analysis drives this idea of colonial bioarchaeology. However, the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives regarding the study of ancestral remains can not only build a bridge between scientific and Indigenous perspectives but influence

the practice of bioarchaeology in colonial environments positively by generating decolonizing forms of bioarchaeology through a willingness to demonstrate First Nations cultural protocols regarding ancestral remains and by actively communicating with descendant communities. Bioarchaeological and Indigenous perspectives must come together to delve deeper into bioarchaeological questions that would not only benefit First Nations but also benefit the understanding of humanity. I am confident that as archaeological and bioarchaeological perspectives are decolonized in BC we will see more integration of First Nations cultural protocols in bioarchaeological practices and contribute new bioarchaeological knowledge and theories.

This has been an account of one researcher's experiences at a single academic institution and at a single archaeological consulting firm in BC. It is not my intention to suggest that all disciplines operate in the ways I have presented, or that I am the only bioarchaeologists to have ever had the feelings I have just shared. My intention was to use my experiences as examples of how my perceptions have been shaped within these very specific situations, and that others facing similar situations could benefit from the reflections I have shared. For those individual bioarchaeologist and disciplines that have already reached similar conclusions as I have, and are actively engaging in practices of decolonizing bioarchaeology, I hope this reflection could serve as an act of solidarity to those who place decolonizing bioarchaeology in the forefront on their research.

References

Anderson L.
2006 Analytic Autoethnography. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 35(4):373-395.

Atkinson P., A. Coffey and S. Delamont
1999 Ethnography: Post, Past, and Present. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 28:460-471.

Barrett, A.R., and M.L. Blakey
2011 Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Colonial New York: A Bioarchaeological Study of the New York African Burial Ground. Chapter 8. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S.C. Agarwal and B.A. Glencross, eds. Pp 212-251. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Bochner, A. P.
2005 Surviving Autoethnography. Studies in Symbolic Interaction 28:51-58.

Budhwa, R.
2005 An Alternate Model for First Nations Involvement in Resource Management Archaeology. Canadian Journal of Archaeology 29(1):20-45.

Buikstra, J.E.
2006 Repatriation and Bioarchaeology: Challenges and Opportunities. Chapter 15. *In* Bioarchaeology: The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains. J. E. Buikstra and L. A. Beck, eds. Pp 389-415. San Francisco: Elsevier.

Buikstra J.E. and D. Ubelaker
1994 Standards for Data Collection From Human Skeletal Remains. Research Series 44. Fayetteville, AR: Arkansas Archaeological Survey.

Chang, Heewon
2008 Autoethnography as Method. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Condrashoff, C.
1971 An Archaeological Survey of Parks and Recreation Reserves by Michael Blake for the Provincial Museum, Summer 1971. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1971-0030d.

Cybulski J.S.
1975 Physical Anthropology at Owikeno Lake. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1975-0008a.

Cybulski, J.S., A.D. McMillan, R. S. Malhi, B. M. Kemp, H. Harry and S. Cousins
2007 The Big Bar Lake Burial: Middle Period Human Remains from the Canadian Plateau. Canadian Journal of Archaeology 31:55-78.

Doloriert, Clair and Sally Sambrook
2012 Organisational Autoethnography. Journal of Organizational Ethnography 1(1):83-95

Eldridge, M.
1978 Preliminary Report for the 1977 Hope Archaeological Project. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1977-0016.

Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner
2011 Autoethnography: An Overview. Historical Social Research. 36(4):273-290.

Ellis, Carolyn and Arthur P. Bochner
2006 Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography: An Autopsy. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 35:429.

Ewing, Robyn G.
2011 Finding Middle Ground: Case Studies in Negotiated Repatriation. MA thesis, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia.

Hollimon, Sandra E.
2011 Sex and Gender in Bioarchaeological Research: Theory, Method, and Interpretation. Chapter 6. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S.C. Agarwal and B. A. Glencross, eds. Pp 149-182. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Howe G.
1981 Report of the Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Caribou Regional Archaeological Impact Assessment. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1980-0006.

Johnson Fladmark, Sharon
1973 Report: Shuswap Lakes Archaeological Project. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1972-0019.

Joyce, Rosemary
2005 Archaeology of the Body. Annual Review of Anthropology 34:139-158.

Klassen, M. A.
2008 First Nations, the Heritage Conservation Act, and the Ethics of Heritage Stewardship. The Midden 40(4): 8-17.

Kleinman A.
1997 The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence. *In* Violence and Subjectivity. V. Das, A. Kleinman, M. Ramphele, P. Reynolds, eds. Pp 226-241. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lawhead S.
1980 A Report on the Investigations of the 1979 Mobile Salvage Crew. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1979-0015

Littleton, Judith
2011 Moving From the Canary in the Coalmine: Modeling Childhood in Bahrain. Chapter 13. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S. C. Agarwal and B. A. Glencross, eds. Pp 361-389. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Marechal, G.
2010 Autoethnography. *In* Encyclopedia of Case Study Research. A. J. Mills, G. Durepos and E. Wiebe, eds. Pp 44-47. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Marcus, George E. and Michael M. J. Fischer
1999 Anthropology as Cultural Critique. Second Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

May, Vanessa
2011 Autoethnography. *In* Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture. Dale Southerton, ed. Pp 78-79. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mitchell, D.H.
1967 Archaeological Investigations, Summer 1966. Provincial Archaeological Report Library. Report 1966-0004.

Nicholas, George P.
2006 Decolonizing the Archaeological Landscape: The Practices and Politics of Archaeology in British Columbia. The American Indian Quarterly 30(3-4):350-380.

Ortner, Donald J.
2003 Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains, Second ed. San Francisco: Elsevier Academic Press.

Pearson, O.M. and J. E. Buikstra
2006 Behaviour and the Bones. *In* Bioarchaeology: The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains. J.E. Buikstra and L. A. Beck, eds. Pp207-226. San Francisco: Elsevier Academic Press.

Roberts C.
2011 The Bioarchaeology of Leprosy and Tuberculosis: A Comparative Study of Perceptions, Stigma, Diagnosis, and Treatment. Chapter 9. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S. C. Agarwal and B. A. Glencross, eds. Pp 252-282. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sanger D.
1962 Report on Excavations at EdRk:4, Near Lillooet, BC. Provincial Archaeology Report Library. Report 1962-0003.

Sofaer, Joanna R.
2006 The Body as Material Culture: A Theoretical Osteoarchaeology. New York: Cambridge University Press.
2011 Towards a Social Bioarchaeology of Age. Chapter 10. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S.C. Agarwal and B. A. Glencross, eds. Pp 285-311. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Stutz, Liv Nilsson
2008 More Than Metaphor: Approaching the Human Cadaver in Archaeology. *In* The Materiality of Death: Bodies, Burials, Beliefs. F. Flahlander and T. Ostigaard, eds. Pp 19-25. Oxford:BAR International Series 1768.

Tung, Tiffany A.
2012 Violence, Ritual, and the Wari Empire: A Social Bioarchaeology of Imperialism in the Ancient Andes. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Turner, Bethany L. and Valerie A. Andrushko
2011 Partnerships, Pitfalls, and Ethical Concerns in International Bioarchaeology. Chapter 4. *In* Social Bioarchaeology. S.C. Agarwal and B. A. Glencross, eds. Pp 44-67. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ubelaker, D. H.
2006. The Changing Role of Skeletal Biology at the Smithsonian. Chapter 3. *In* Bioarchaeology: The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains. J. E. Buikstra and L. A. Beck, eds. Pp 73-82. San Francisco: Elsevier.

Ubelaker, D.H. and L. Grant
1989 Human Skeletal Remains: Preservation or Reburial? Yearbook of Physical Anthropology 32:249-287.

Walker, P.L.
2000 Bioarchaeological Ethics: A Historical Perspective on the Value of Human Remains. *In* Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton. M.A. Katzenberg and S.R. Saunders, eds. Pp 3-39. Toronto, ON: Wiley-Liss.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 34-50

Collaborative Archaeology: A Perspective from the Yukon-Alaska Borderlands

Jordan D. Handley
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: Archaeological investigations among the Upper Tanana speaking peoples of the Yukon-Alaska Borderlands began with seemingly conventional approaches to respectful consultation and collaboration in the early 1990s. After having been engaged with this work since 2011, first as a student and now as a researcher at the Little John site, I have accumulated experiences which have shaped my ideas regarding the maintenance of collaboration, how it evolves over time, and how its unique community context promotes a relaxed and mixed methodological strategy that I call an unstandardized approach to collaboration. This includes formal and informal relationships or friendships, diversifying institutionalized concepts of capacity building, and deprioritizing disciplinary goals that impose time constraints in favour of just being present. This approach has been nurtured by the cultural ethos of our host community over twenty-five years of engagement and an ongoing conversation of "how" anthropologists should approach and practice community collaboration. The result is an academic archaeological program which has become integrated into a small northern community of transitional hunter-gatherers that contribute to the shared goals of collaborative archaeologies –particularly the deconstruction of power resulting from colonial legacies and the reconstruction of power rooted in locality.

KEYWORDS: collaborative archaeology, community archaeology, archaeology method, archaeology theory, indigenous archaeology

Introduction

Self-reflectivity has permeated the social sciences at large in recent decades and archaeology has been no exception. In particular, it has led archaeologists to be increasingly concerned with the colonial foundations of the discipline's practice and our relevance within contemporary societies. This has led to a variety of public engagements, consultations, and collaborations. In this paper, I will draw upon my own long-term engagement with an archaeological and ethnographic field program to document a strategy that favours an *unstandardized* approach that draws upon elements from multiple current "collaborative archaeologies." My goal is to reflect upon my own student experiences and share some of my stories, placing them within the current discussions of the collaborate discourse. I will begin by reviewing some of the many approaches which lie under the umbrella of "collaborative archaeologies," and then discuss how elements of each are present within the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History Project.

For more than twenty years, scholars have been developing an array of collaborative archaeologies, including *Indigenous archaeology* (Nicholas and Andrews 1997; Bruchac et al. 2010), *community archaeology* (Marshall 2002; Moser et al. 2002) *community-based archaeology* (Greer et al. 2002), *community-based participatory archaeology* (Atalay 2012) *ethnographic archaeology* (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009), *collaborative archaeology* (Chilton and Hart 2009; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008), and *public archaeology* (Brighton 2011; Lassiter 2008). All of this theoretical momentum has, in part, been the result of a desire by some to transform a *movement* into a more substantive disciplinary *shift* (Atalay et al. 2014:10) that is grounded in a type of scholarship that is meaningful to con-

temporary non-academic communities, particularly Indigenous communities whose history archaeology is investigating, and to engage with and encourage different means of knowledge production and ways of knowing. While all of these archaeologies share this common purpose, they have also emerged within a generalized disagreement on how collaboration should be conducted (Angelbeck and Grier 2014:519).

In continuing this conversation on how archaeologists should or could practice collaboration, in this paper I will present a number of experiential narratives that I have accumulated through my involvement with the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History Project since 2011, which includes the long-term excavations at the Little John site near Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory. These narratives have not only shaped my understandings of collaboration, they interact to demonstrate the nuanced principles that guide our collaborative strategy. Our work in this project does not adhere to any single collaborative archaeology, rather it supports an unstandardization of collaborative archaeology. This idea to 'unstandardize' is not meant to discredit ongoing theoretical development working to advance the larger collaborative movement within our discipline, but to document how a mixed methodological strategy and informal approach have resulted in meaningful archaeological and anthropological knowledge in the Yukon-Alaska borderlands. I further hope to demonstrate how this fluidity contributes to the common goals of the collaborative archaeologies collective to deconstruct the ongoing power imbalances in archaeological knowledge production and to produce research that aligns with host community objectives and is meaningful beyond academia.

Collaborative Archaeologies

Many approaches to collaborative archaeology have been developed over recent decades. I review four such approaches here, including their merits, fundamental differences, and shared goals: Public Archaeology; Community Archaeology; Community-based Participatory Archaeology, and Archaeological Ethnography. While not an exhaustive review, it does reflect the diversity of contemporary approaches.

Public archaeology's central purpose is the promotion of a sense of shared human heritage. It achieves this by focusing on the education of the general public and mass audiences through excavation and archaeological exhibits (Brighton 2011:346; Lassiter 2008:71). Public archaeological programs engage with people beyond the community level to advance notions of a collective heritage, often with the goal of instilling a desire to steward, protect and promote archaeology at an individual level. Public archaeologies also support multi-vocality. The integration of the greater population can be used to assess contemporary feelings about the past on the practice of archaeology in general and thus inclusive of different ways of knowing. It has also been promoted as means of informing the pasts of neglected or disenfranchised groups and providing an opportunity to share these untold stories and cultural heritages (Menzies 2015:5).

Community archaeology is an umbrella term that includes a number of sub-approaches with subtly different definitions on what it exactly signifies and entails. In general, it can be understood as the incorporation of strategies that facilitate the involvement of local people in all aspects of archaeological research from investigation to interpretation (Moser et al. 2002:220). Some consider it an approach to cultural resource management as opposed to academic archaeology (Marshall 2002:213), while others would highlight the role of collaboration above consultation within community archaeology practice (Moser et al. 2002:202). It is important to acknowledge community archaeology as a collaborative archaeology currently prominent within academia. It may not be mandated by law in academic research like it is when aligned with development and industry or cultural resource management. It may not be as frequently practiced or as illuminated by formalized procedure in academic research, but it is by and large the prevailing approach applied to current archaeological projects to at least some degree.

Community-based participatory research signifies a branch of community archaeology thoroughly defined and developed for expanded application by Atalay (2012). She demonstrates it's utility in both cultural resource management and academically

approached archaeology. Community-based participatory archaeology is reciprocal for all partners, and its central tenant is to value information and ways of knowing from diverse knowledge systems including Indigenous or traditional knowledge (Atalay 20122:4). This is in fact one of its strengths, the ability to combine knowledge generated through different traditions and experiences. It advocates a partnership approach motivated by community rights to be active participants in the creation and production of knowledge (Atalay 2012:45).

Finally, *Archaeological Ethnography* is broadly defined "as a trans-disciplinary and trans-cultural space that enables researchers and diverse publics to engage in various conversations, exchanges, and interventions" about the past (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009:65). It is a much more academically applied theoretical approach. It was introduced through ethno-archaeology and typically operates through this tradition but addresses larger ethnographic and ethno-historic issues alongside archaeological ones.

Archaeological ethnography brings different epistemological values to archaeological interpretation through the integration of community knowledge, experience, and relationships to materials and space. Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos describe archaeological ethnography as occupying a space "centered upon the material traces of various times and involving researchers as well as various other participants" (2009:73). This approach requires the researcher to familiarize themselves with all aspects of the participating community's relationship with material culture in a practice called "total ethnography" (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009:75).

While these approaches are diverse in their emphasis on either method or theory and their relationship with either academia or industry, they share an overarching objective. They all aim to make the archaeological past both accessible and relevant to contemporary society in ways that are inclusive of the non-archaeological community, including their knowledge systems, cultural expertise, and life experience through participation and collaboration.

Collaboration has been used quite generally as a tool of decolonization (Nicholas et al. 2011:20). Following the internal recognition that anthropological (and archaeological) research was often another exploitative extension contributing to the colonial tradition (Asad 1973; Gough 1968), many academics shifted out of traditional research objectives and began to align themselves with the communities in which they work, including their sociopolitical objectives, resulting in new standards within professional associations.[1]

Collaboration thus developed in explicit opposition to conventional practices of archaeology – shifting from hierarchical practices and pursuing open and safe places for sharing deeper understandings of community values, perspectives, and epistemologies (Nicholas et al. 2011:25).

Our endeavours at the Little John site include aspects of each these approaches. We engage with diverse publics from Alaskan Highway tourists to youth groups from the Whitehorse region,[2] we translate our research through film, television, radio and print,[3] we have participation in excavation and analysis from the local community[4] and we collaborate on a continual basis to assess our work and it's impact through regular discussions with our partners. We engage in ethnographic, linguistic, and archaeological research. We have hosted a diverse group of visiting and returning students and scholars ranging from such disciplines as art history, ornithology, geology, geography, botany, political science, linguistics, biology, literature, performance art, and playwrights. Our approach at the Little John site utilizes aspects of many informed theoretical collaborative strategies in a methodologically fluid practice. The experiential

1 See: Statement of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples (http://www.canadianarchaeology.com); Principles of Archaeological Ethics (http://www.saa.org); Principles of Professional Responsibility (http://www.americananthro.org)

2 For example: Northern Cultural Expressions Society's summer cultural program for native youth at risk (2014-2015); Whitehorse Assisted Living Household led by WRFN member Janet Vandermeer (2007)

3 For Example: Nine-year-old yukoner makes archaeological breakthrough 2008. Chris Oke. Yukon News; Little John Country 2009. Max Fraser. Whitehorse, YT. Video Short. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5qqynzPIHM); Wild Archaeology (S1E3) 2016. Tracy German and Karen Hanson. Aboriginal Peoples Television Network; Community Gallery Exhibition: Little John 2017 (Archaeological Site Artist-in-Residence 2015) Dr Ukjese van Kampen. Yukon Arts Centre.

4 Of the 320 fieldworkers involved in the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History Project between 1994 and 2016 106 have been from Yukon – Alaskan First Nations.

Figure 1. The Midnight Sun at Mile 1216 of the Alaska Highway – Little John's Camp. (Handley 2012).

narratives that follow intend to situate the unique context of Canada's north western Subarctic and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that live there. Further, I wish to encourage the consideration of how research fits within and impacts the lives of the local communities where it is practiced as opposed to how it will fulfill the requirements of disciplinary advancement and sustainability.

Two decades ago it was proposed that for archaeology to move forward, those whose lives are affected by our research must be more than subjects but also partners, sources of insight, and contributors to the archaeological enterprise (Wylie 1995:267). One of our main challenges has been to find ways of creating and maintaining these partnerships. I take the position that our research must harmoniously compliment the current lifestyles and livelihoods of the communities we work within not as research partners, but as friends.

Site and Program Background

July, 10, 2014. The Burnt Paw in Tok was an interesting outfit. In one respect it catered to tourists – the walls lined with Alaskan novelties and cabins to rent out back that provided it's guests with the ultimate Alaskan experience not devoid of modern comforts. However, it also served the needs of the local dog musher community, which is a much bigger cliental than the average person would assume. They sold dog food, tackle, and even Alaskan husky pups. We had originally gone to Tok for provisions, groceries, a new hammock, tent, and bug repellent, I'm sure was on the list. Also on the agenda was a quick survey of the Tok Terminal, a remnant of the WW II era Norman Wells pipeline, which held a cluster of archaeological sites documented a few years back by the U.S. Military. The man ringing through our purchases was pleasant, probably in his early seventies. He asked what we were doing up here, wordlessly acknowledging my Canadian accent, not uncommon for a traveler of the Alaska Highway. More likely it was our less than groomed appearance that gave us away.

– We're archaeologists. Working at a site just outside Beaver Creek, on the Alaska side.

– I knew a man from over that way once. Ya, he walked a lot. All over this country really. His name was White River Johnny. Boy, did he walk a lot. Always coming and going, been years since I saw him last.

This exchange, though brief, made me reflect on a few things. Since my first summer here as field school student I had heard tales of Little John, most prominently that he was a man of many miles. The Indigenous community throughout the borderlands, and the non-Indigenous all the way over here in Alaska knew him as a man of foot power. He understood this landscape and traveled it in ways foreign to you or I. He was a keeper of a deep traditional knowledge of the land – the muskeg and watersheds, the animals and skies. He kept this knowledge alive throughout his travels and, in a way, the landscape mirrors this in it's keeping of Little John's legacy. Such traversing of the subarctic landscape was not and is not just a means of travel but a way of life and understanding.

The Little John site was named after this respected elder. He went by many names, White River Johnny, *Klaa Dii Cheeg* ("His Hand Drops"), but affectionately he was known as Little John. For as long as people remember, the site had always been Little

John's hunting camp, and after recognition of its archaeological significance in 2006 and consultation with the White River First Nation, it was formally named after him at a community tea at the site which included a cheeky ribbon cutting ceremony (Easton et al. 2011:289). The site was used as a camp and game lookout during Little John's time, demonstrably as well as for millennia before him, and it continues to be used in the present day by his kin and descendents for this same purpose.

Situated about 12 km from the village of Beaver Creek, Yukon and 2 km from the international border with Alaska, the Little John site lies within the traditional territory of the White River First Nation, members of Upper Tanana speaking *Dineh* in Canada and their American relatives, members of the Villages of Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross. The site is located, rather conveniently for archaeologists and locals alike, just meters off the Alaska Highway. This accessibility is rare in the great physical expanse of the subarctic. It is actually quite astonishing, given it's proximity, that the highway did not significantly impact the integrity of the site – archaeological speaking – like it had so many up and down its nearly 2,500 km transect. Excavating here I am oftentimes astounded by evidence of the highway builders, as I unearth their discarded shotgun shells or razor blades, lost jewelry and forgotten notes. They had a temporary yet substantive camp here during its construction, and were unaware of the antiquity of human activity below their feet, the significance of this place both past and present, and that they themselves were becoming part of the archaeological record.

As an archaeological site, Little John's camp was first documented by Norman Easton of Yukon College in 2002 during field surveys associated with the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History project, which he began in 1992 (Easton and MacKay 2008:333). The survey revealed an abundant collection of lithic artifacts and preserved animal bone that eventually proved to be the oldest in the Yukon and became the focus of Easton's culture history project within the region.

Archaeologically, the site represents 14,000 years of occupation, first occupied by a highly mobile people, the founders of this landscape. It is recognized as the second oldest site in northwestern North America (Easton et al. 2011; Potter et al. 2013). However, there is much more to the Little John site than the unfolding of this ancient human past and its insight into the remains of this ambiguous founding population. There is a lively, generous, and accepting community of humans, descendant and from away, that share this land today.

Figure 2. David Johnny and Easton at the look out, overlooking the Mirror Creek Valley. (Handley 2014)

The Community

June 11, 2011. At half past eleven, Bessie and Chelsea Johnny pulled into camp. Most students were already nestling into their respective tents. The sun was high in the sky, the valley's breeze rustling the fallen spruce needles mixed with the busy caws of nearby ravens, reflecting the liveliness of northern summer-nights. Chief David and Eldred, his youngest son, had shot a moose and they "invited" us to take part in skinning and butchering –Norm knew it was a demand and roused us to participate. Like the land and animals, the people here come alive during the long days of the summer season. When we arrived, the moose was being pulled behind a boat from the far side of the lake, it's shores vibrant with children playing, elders laughing and drinking tea, and many hands tending to the moose. We mostly watched and helped when asked.

It wasn't until 2 a.m. that we finished. We removed our soiled clothes and placed them inside

> *of garbage bags to be stored in the cab of the suburban until we had the opportunity to clean them again. This is a typical night in Beaver Creek – a village of roughly a hundred people. It so happens that our short field season intersects with this wonderfully alive but very busy time for our hosts. During the summer, the Upper Tanana and neighbouring groups are still largely dedicated to hunting and gathering. So while many work at jobs, a large part of their time is spent driving the highway to visit distant friends or relatives, along the way berry picking, fishing, harvesting spruce root, hunting any variety of animal from porcupine to* moose, or staying up with the sun and sipping tea.

Regardless of a conventional or collaborative approach, and beyond the theoretical or ethical goals of contemporary archaeology, archaeological research conducted in the Borderlands runs the risk of being intrusive to both the lifestyle and livelihoods of our hosts. The presence of a field crew of two or twenty, for two to twenty-five years, is nothing less than substantial to the members of this remote northern village composed largely of transitional hunter-gatherers (see Easton 2007; Nadasdy 2003) as they adapt to our presence and we adapt to theirs. The basic premise that informs our collaboration is flexible adaptation – a fundamental socio-cultural characteristic of the *Dineh* (see VanStone 1974; Wilson 2003).

This overarching flexibility and adaptability flows into the application of other governing credos leant to us from the cultural repertoire of our *Dineh* hosts and teachers, including; 1) building and maintaining meaningful relationships through *reciprocity*; 2) approaching capacity building *advantageously*; and 3) *being present* despite the confrontation of temporal limitations. The application of the socio-cultural traits of host communities has been discussed by many, most notably, reciprocity (Clauss 2014; Smith and Jackson 2010; Wylie 2000). However, it is the combination of an approach guided by principles (Angelbeck and Grier 2014), learned and derived from relevant cultural groups, and ultimately the consideration of the unique socio-cultural circumstances

Figure 3. David skinning a moose with the 'supervision' of two of his grandchildren (Handley 2011).

leading to the current make up of our community that has manifested into an unstandardized collaborative strategy.

Ultimately, an unstandardized approach (which may be interpreted as *informal*, *atheoretical,* or even *unorganized* by some) is sensitive to the fact that no two communities are alike. While researchers may relate to the circumstances of community life, our story is unique to us in the sense that all collaborative programs denote their own degree of individuality. And as every community is different, all attempts of collaborative research will inevitably require a unique research strategy (Tondue 2014:140). Ongoing collaboration here begins when the trowel is laid down to play with children, when we replace a meeting agenda for a cup of tea and talk of dogs and moose, when we first clean white fish and later conduct debitage analysis.

Building and Maintaining Meaningful Relationships through *Reciprocity*

> *For over a decade now they've been welcoming us come back here. We haul up all our people – students and visiting scholars, our equipment and convoy of vehicles. We litter the land with 1 by 1 meter square holes, clear the vegetation and alter the landscape both physically but, more importantly, metaphysically. We set up our dozen or so tents, stock the gear sheds and inventory the storage bins and we stay there. For two months maybe four – the entire summer season. There are no words for this kind of generosity. Especially in light of the historical infringements and injustices suffered from the imposition of our own 'nooglee' – not Dineh but apparently human – ancestors.*
>
> *This imposition began with the geological surveys of America and Canada, staking out political boundaries that severed their traditional territory with an international divide, followed by the self-serving motivations of foreign participants in the fur trade and gold rush. And, finally, the construction of the Alaska Highway which would bring with it a limitless amount of outsiders with their sense of superiority and their project of cultural transformation. All of these historical events would impact the Dineh way of life. In the grand scheme of things, our work adds yet another historical event of non-Native presence, altering the meaning and memory of not just this camp or this knoll but this 'country.' They don't let us do this because they have to. They don't let us do this out of archaeological curiosity or as a means of acquiring a scientific form of insight into the ancient past. They do this because, first and foremost, we are friends. And because we are friends they trust us.*

This trust was built by ten years of commitment to an authentic interest in their culture and language, political and social history, their daily lives and relationships, and their traditional knowledge and existential insight, before any intensive archaeological investigation of the White River's traditional territory. Easton's relationship with the community began with one person, *Nelnah* – Bessie John, who recruited him as the historian of the borderlands; it was only after many years of being there the archaeology began (Easton 2001; Fraser 2009).

In the not-so-distant past, the Upper Tanana were forced to choose between being residents of Canada or Alaska, a decision that would greatly impact their lives and the generations to follow (Easton 2007). Currently, the White River First Nation remains one of three "unsettled" First Nations in the Yukon Territory – they rejected the land claim settlement proffered by the Canadian state and remain an Indian Act Band. As their negotiations continue over their unsettled land claims so does their need for the external recognition of continued presence within their traditional territory. This is where the goals of the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History project and the political goals of the White River First Nation align – in the motivation, desire, and necessity to establish their past and present affiliation to their land. This has included the production of two major ethno-historic monographs for the Borderland *Dineh* documenting their traditional land use and occupancy in support of their claims (Easton 2005; Easton et al. 2013). This integration of goals and interests is identified as a contributor to collaborative relationships (McGuire 2008:146).

The contemporary relationship between *nooglee* archaeologists and *Dineh* residents is strong because we are friends here in the borderlands. Like all meaningful relationships, these bonds required time, the building of trust, and authenticity. This effort, begun in the early 1990s, was not met without skepticism, and our *Dineh* friends delight in telling stories of Easton's early years in the community which reveal his cultural missteps, but which simultaneously reflect his dogged pursuit of cultural understanding and community integration. By the time of my entry into the community in 2011 I was privileged to benefit from the previous twenty years of effort by Easton and two earlier generations of students. And this is where I reflect from, a place in time where I have benefited from the work and experiences of my mentor and hosts, a place I share with many of my peers in which collaborative-, public-, Indigenous-, engaged-, community- archaeology has become the only practice we know.

Figure 4. Signage fore the FHQ – Permafrost is No Excuse! (Arguably neither are constraints of time nor money). (Handley 2011.)

Figure 5. Home. (Handley 2015.)

A hallmark of all the collaborative archaeologies has been the deconstruction of power imbalances in the production and dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of archaeological pasts as part of the ongoing construction of Indigenous cultural identity. I consider the dismantling of historical power structures in the Borderlands to begin with pure and simple friendship. Avoiding the existential complexities that curtail attempts to define *friendship*, I simply argue that it is based in trust, authenticity, and reciprocity in practice through time. I believe it is notable that the Upper Tanana's ability to continually re-engage in relationships with *nooglee* reflects a willingness to rebuild trust where others might not. It is this rather astounding ability to forgive and trust, despite the historical experience of the community, and the project's insistence that we recognize, appreciate, and reciprocate this trust, that results in friendship.

While friendship is the defining feature of the relationship, secondary to this is their role as our hosts and we as guests. The host/guest model has been advocated elsewhere (McNiven and Russel 2005 and Brady 2009). The premise of this model is that archaeologists are guests in Indigenous communities, and our work is based on a partnership with and consent of the host community. This approach does not share power linearly but, instead shifts the power from archaeologist to host. Shifting or sharing power are common approaches to building relationships within collaborative archaeology.

Friendship-like relationships are evident in the literature (Menzies 2001). Continued considerations of friendship can be discerned through discussions of the features of collaborative relationships, emphasizing trust and mutual respect (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2004, 2006). Also, proposed are *virtue ethics*, pursing "civility, benevolence, generosity, loyalty, dependability, thoughtfulness, and friendliness" (Thomas 2008: xi-xii). Indeed, "Horizontal relations" has been suggested as an overarching principle to conduct meaningful collaboration (Angelbeck and

Grier 2014). In this view, reciprocity can be understood as a part of collaborative friendship, associated with sharing the benefits of knowledge production. This commitment to reciprocity is a strong shared feature in the collaborative archaeologies but, I believe, should extend beyond processes of production and gain and be an organically derived attribute of meaningful personal relationships.

At Little John, the significance of historical power imbalances when working within the framework of a colonial legacy is explicitly acknowledged. Students are exposed to the colonial experiences of our hosts as a common feature of their stories around the camp fire. Knowledge as a product requires partnership in which all stakeholders share the benefits. However, knowledge as a process occurs from a foundation of friendship. It is through this process that we can shift from a need to share power towards a means of deconstructing it. There is a coolly detached postmodern position that all friendships are built upon a power structure, but I do not share this cynical view.

Approaching Capacity Building *Advantageously*

> *July 24, 2014. We stood there, Norm, myself and two young women from the village, puffy eyed and coffee in hand contemplating today's game plan. The girls had been coming out for a couple of days now to excavate, and on rainy days catch up on analytics and lab work. Norman relayed the plan of attack to me for our units and then asked the young women,*
>
> *– 'What do you want to learn today?'*
>
> *–'Math.'*
>
> *The girls were getting a small cash incentive to come out and help. And as they had expressed to me, their work was a way to make a little money over the summer. It was also a way to keep busy, 'just something to do' as one girl had put it. I wouldn't say they weren't interested in the work, and as days went on their proficiency surely advanced as did our discussions of it. They would often ask questions – what happens to the artifacts when they leave the field? What does this tool do? How do you know? What does this change in dirt mean? I am always keen to take advantage of teachable moments. What would resonate with me, for the rest of our time together, and my time spent with other participants, was that answer. 'Math.' When asked what they wanted to learn they didn't say stone tools, they didn't say heritage management. They didn't say I want to take better field notes. In that moment, archaeological field methods and theory was surely an option but was it an opportunity?*

Figure 6. The grandchildren of Little John excavating the Late Pleistocene paleosols of the east lobe – while simultaneously making mud pies (Handley 2014)

As we aspire to redefine the relationship between the archaeologist (and anthropologist) and the community, escaping the legacy of inequality remains one of our most significant challenges (La Salle 2010:405). Within collaborative archaeology, the process of capacity building has been fundamental to decentralizing such power relations. It supports the larger Indigenous movement towards reclamation and self-determination through efforts of returning the control of culture, language, and history to Aboriginal peoples (Conkey 2005; Nicholas et al. 2011). In this way collaborative archaeology confronts our discipline's colonial legacy of managing and interpreting cultures of subject. The mainstream trajectory of community capacity building is to provide people access to the tools and strategies required to manage and control their own cultural representa-

Figure 7. The author preparing signage for Timeka and Eddie Johnny's surprise joint birthday party at the Little John site (Easton 2013))

tion and heritage so as to pass on- or back- the baton of stewardship to their rightful hands. Ideally, so long as we practice this while not forgetting to emphasize the significance of and find a place for traditional knowledge and expertise, capacity building becomes an effective means of combating these old stubborn power dynamics. Although intentions are seemingly 'good' and activist, this approach to capacity building borders a shaky line between empowering communities and masking the existing power imbalance.

La Salle, a fellow self-reflective student, asks the question, "how *is* the power actually shifted when the people, the gatekeepers to and objects of our study, become our partners in it?" (2010:412). The currency of research is measured in the production of knowledge including, publications, dissertations, and reports – products which have been identified as aligned with the "dominant social order" (Menzies 2015:16-17; see also Raymond 1977). Through collaboration we attempt to share this position, by practicing research that is egalitarian in nature by producing knowledge that is aligned with community interests as well as archaeological/anthropological interests (Atalay 2014:55). It draws upon the means of understanding by both parties to produce research that is reciprocally beneficial. However, the question remains, does power truly shift when the gatekeepers of archaeological knowledge adhere to the dominant social order by becoming active participants and gainful partners in the production of academic research?

Similarly, capacity building vis-à-vis training in heritage management and archaeological methods shifts power through the attempt to return cultural control to the members of that culture. It does not presume that this training will change the lives of Indigenous community members in that they will necessarily become professional archaeologists but that they will be better situated to maintain cultural stewardship in the future (Silliman and Dring 2008:74). I question whether this means of 'training,' one that maintains the systems used to manage culture, learned through the formal educational system of our inherent dominant social order, is a prerequisite to the adequate maintenance and control of heritage?

In the same way that some researchers have "mastered the technical form of respectful consultation, but without the necessary depth and the real respect that is required," (Menzies 2001:21) community capacity building may mimic past actions of simply promoting academic opportunity. A conventional model of community capacity runs the risk of becoming another rehearsed component of collaborative archaeology, an easy copy-paste fulfilling our institutionalized requirements for collaboration, proposals, funding applications, and research designs that include rearticulated statements along the lines of 'we will train local community members in empirical scientific methods and archaeological field methods,' or 'we will build community capacity for localized heritage management strategies.'

As community capacity building becomes a standardized part of collaborative archaeology we move away from that girl who, in fact, came to the site that day with a desire to improve her math skills. Reciprocity at Little John occurs when I helped that girl brush up on math over the summer, or when the kids were dropped off at the site for the day because their parents wanted to make a quick trip to Tanacross and knew they would be kept busy and safe, or because the kids were bored in the village and Little John is fun – the closest thing to a daycare facility within 500 kilometers. Capacity building occurs on a spectrum in the Borderland's community because the community's interest in participating occurs on a spectrum. And while the efforts of our

Figure 8. Ready for a feast – culture camp. (Handley 2014.)

Figure 9. Drying Fish. One of many ongoing activities at culture camp (Handley 2014).

grander goals to work alongside White River First Nation in the overdue restoration of self-governance may not have been clear that day, a teenage girl got to have fun, do a little archaeology, and practice fractions. I think it is pretty important that we talk about that too.

Being Present and Confronting Temporal Limitations

> *End of July 2014. The camp numbers in the last weeks of fieldwork were down to Norman and I. Productivity was low but I thoroughly enjoyed the calmness. We often extended our morning coffee, took turns making meals and extended our working hours well into the evening, a luxury afforded by the never setting sun.*
>
> *Culture Camp runs every year at Ten Mile camp up the river from the Village of Northway. We were invited along. It is a community program that provides local youth the opportunity to advance their knowledge and skill in a wide range of traditional practices, language, song and dance routines, subsistence skills, bush craft, oral history, and more. It is very much a community event, with 40 to 80 people there at any given time over the week. I spent a lot of the day with David, Ruth, and Ruth's sister Alice. She introduced me to many people and explained who others were from a distance. Northway was Ruth's home village and this is why I was so excited to attend culture camp, since I had yet to meet many of Ruth's people. This day greatly extended my exposure into cultural practices and customs of the Upper Tanana but also the social landscape. Culture camp is an anthropologist's dream – traditional foods and food sharing practices, the processing of moose and fish, beading and basket-making, kinship interaction, the stuff of our discipline. It is also just a nice way to spend a Saturday.*
>
> *Every season begins with a detailed itinerary, a list of research goals with northwesterly expansions of the East Lobe, reaching the 14,000 year old loess below the Younger Dryas paleosols, and getting back out to Owl Skull to extend earlier test pits in the ground. And then someone will shoot a moose, someone will stop in on the drive to Northway, or we'll go out and harvest spruce root to give to Elders. It is this interface between the past and present that makes work meaningful to me as an archaeologist but also as a person. And I believe it is this state of 'just being' that has contributed to an establishment of meaningful relationships between the archaeologist and the community.*

In academic archaeology it is common to be temporally and financially constrained by educational institutions and our budget. These constraints are often the biggest challenge faced by academic archaeologists engaged in collaborative work (Celeste 2009:6; Nicholas et al. 2011:12). Further, objectives

motivated by archaeological research interests can deter from the current moment and situational opportunities to engage with communities about culture and traditional knowledge and gain insight into alternative value systems. These institutional expectations of the use of our time rarely align with or are sensitive to Indigenous communities' sense of time (Celeste 2009:6). In the north, casual physical presence within the community signifies not just commitment but a sensitivity towards different constructs of time, which has been identified as integral to maintenance of meaningful relations (Tondue 2014:421). One possible tool to move past internal perceptions of this constraint is to confront it through changing and minimizing priorities or even de-prioritizing research goals in favour of being participants in the emergent priorities of the community. Such a shift of research priorities accommodates and brings awareness to contemporary sociopolitical agendas of descendent populations we work with (Arden 2002:380). At Little John this shift has manifested into what I would define as a de-prioritization that values the contextual nuances of the present. The trowel is laid down to make tea and sew while listening to stories from visiting Elders, colour with children, or travel to Tanacross or Northway to assist in a funeral potlatch.

The field of archaeological ethnography presents a theoretical approach to practice archaeology informed by the present. Archaeological ethnography has unintentionally challenged the rigid archaeological distinction between past and present (Hamilakis 2011:405). It furthers its ethno-archaeological origins by viewing descendant communities as more than modern-day proxies of ancient lifeways. Some archaeological ethnographic projects have even explored the auto-ethnographic approach as a means of situating and reflecting on one's own impact in the local context and what it is that we as archaeologists do (Harrison and Schofield 2009:198; Marshall et al. 2009). It is through the merging of ethnographic and archaeological practices that researchers can explore the contemporary relevance and meaning of the material past to communities as well as the political context of archaeology (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009:66).

While collaborative research projects often include diverse cultural components, the philosophy of archaeological ethnography is something I view as lacking in many collaborative models. Research need not be a procedural means to an end so much as a trans-disciplinary, transformative process of learning. Archaeological ethnography de-prioritizes archaeological objectives and requires the researcher to be present in the exploration of the space between the material past and contemporary culture.

Discussion: Un-standardization

Many discussions about the theory and method of collaborative archaeology articulate step by step processes on how to integrate First Nations into all aspects of research, how to build archaeological capacity, and how to build and maintain community partnerships. These methodological approaches maintain rightful utility in establishing respectful interactions within historically exploitative relationships amongst other intentions already discussed. Proponents of these related approaches often express that their strategy is not necessarily universally applicable. Similarly, the unstandardized approach I argue for may not always be suitable. But in the case of small bands of transitional hunter-gatherers in the remote reaches of the north, this approach has proven to be appropriate, successful, and respectful. The fluidity and flexibility of this program has allowed for the development of lasting relationships, reciprocal experiences of learning from one another in non-archaeological or academic ways, while still informing archaeological knowledge and transforming a new generation of archaeologists.

I view collaboration within the Yukon-Alaska Borderlands as one that was born amongst many others in and around the 1990s (Easton and Gotthardt 1989; Easton 1994; Hare and Greer 1996; Nicholas 1997; Spector 1993; Trigger 1990; Yellowhorn 1993; Zimmerman and Echo-Hawk 1990) in a collective response to the discipline's colonial legacy and to establish disciplinary foundations that would first be concerned with respectful consultation followed by authentic intentions to collaborate. Collaboration in this way was developed as a tool to redefine relationships, break down colonial concepts of power, and

Figure 10. Dinner and a show – Seth drumming and singing for his grandmother (the late Martha Sam) (Handley 2014).

work with people to promote Indigenous (as well as community and public) driven goals, whilst contributing meaningful knowledge relevant to all people. Like many academic research projects, these initial efforts have evolved over time. I acknowledge that it is this evolution of collaboration at the Little John Site that shapes my overall understanding of how collaboration has been approached here. However, in this period of heightened self-reflectivity, an assessment of the overall experience, from initiation to present, lends itself first to disagreements on how collaborative archaeology should or could be practiced and the ways in which collaborative archaeology has itself evolved.

In our circumstances on the Yukon-Alaska borderlands, the un-standardization of collaborative archaeology has changed the relationship between community and archaeologist. Archaeologists are faced by disciplinary constraints, primarily time and money. By confronting these constraints and emphasizing relaxed and less formal approaches to collaborative research we avoid extending this imposition of procedural constraints on the communities in which we are practicing. More importantly, we are open to the gifts of knowledge and experience offered to us by our hosts.

When archaeological research occurs within a community it often becomes a part of that community. To apply formal guidelines and processes to collaborative work is to standardize life, experience, and culture. Unstandardizing archaeological collaboration is reactive to this imposition of structure and allows life, archaeology, and research to occur harmoniously, naturally, and transformatively within the communities we work and within ourselves. An unstandardized approach can also help free the archaeologist personally from their own structured concepts and perceptions of research and achievement, opening us to the recognition of new measures of accomplishment valued by the communities in which we work.

Fluid and flexible collaborative practice can be theoretically informed research. Archaeological ethnography and auto-archaeology have been suggested here as a means of increasing reflectivity of the self and our approaches to the past. These processes bring internal awareness to the contemporary present of unique sociocultural contexts, ultimately contributing to the ability to develop collaborative programs based on that community's individual cultural, environmental, and material landscape. Evidently, archaeological ethnography and auto-archaeology can better inform archaeological understandings and they can also inform approaches to collaborative archaeology – at the level of individual context and in the field generally. As we continue to parse out 'how' collaboration 'should' be done, there may not be a right way, or it may be community specific. In the Borderlands we aspire to do it in a way taught to us by our friends and hosts, that is emergent from *Dineh K'èh – The People's Way*.

Conclusion

Theoretical and methodological developments within the field of collaborative archaeology continue to defend Indigenous voices and contributions to archaeological knowledge (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230-232; Zimmerman 1997; Zimmerman 2008), to expose the growing number of advantageous and deceptive claimants of collaborative practice (Angelbeck and Grier 2014:520;Atalay 2014:47-48), and to transform the current ethical movement into a disciplinary shift (Atalay et al. 2014). From my experiences and place of reflection, as a student of the Scottie Creek Borderlands Culture History Program, I can attest that this shift has occurred amongst the

coming generation of archaeologists, as for many of us there is no current distinction between collaborative archaeology and archaeology as this has become the only practice we know. This is equally attributed to the dedication on behalf of the academic community and also the descendent and otherwise affiliated communities in which we/they work.

The lessons I have learned from the Yukon-Alaska Borderlands community regarding an archaeological practice that is fluid and flexible has deeply informed my archaeological understandings of this landscape and shaped my approach to future collaboration. I acknowledge that the principles guiding our work here may not be appropriately applied elsewhere. However, research that is informed by archaeological ethnography occurs within the plane between the archaeological past and contemporary present and preempts a practice that can integrate cultural ethos into collaborative efforts, bring awareness to institutionalized constraints that most threaten the everyday conduct of community life from the perspective of its individuality, and foster the deconstruction of power inherent in academic research through attempts to build authentic friendships. Collaborative archaeology has overcome many challenges but much work remains to be done. Conversations regarding how we should practice collaboration have resulted in a diverse collective of well-developed, often structured methodological strategies. Amongst the Upper Tanana of the Scottie Creek drainage of the Tanana River watershed, an unstandardized approach has greatly contributed to the success of academic research, the establishment of trusting relationships between archaeologist and members of the community, the growth of many students of archaeology, and the transformation of an academic archaeological program into an integrated part of the community whole.

Acknowledgements

Many people throughout the Borderlands region have contributed immeasurably to my "accumulation of experiences" presented here, most notably the Johnny's – Ruth and David – and their relatives, members of the White River First Nation, and the people of Beaver Creek. Norman Alexander Easton – his continued support and mentorship since the first day I entered in on this journey and slept on your attic floor amidst the stone, bone and dirt relics of millennia past – contributed to this paper in more than one way. And, Charles Menzies thank you for your theoretical insight, for assigning a paper that allowed me to articulate these thoughts, and for the opportunity to share them here. My work has been made supported by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies and the Northern Scientific Training Programme. The Yukon College-School of Liberal Arts has also been a significant supporter of this work in the Borderlands.

References

Angelbeck, Bill and Colin Grier
2014 From Paradigms to Practices: Pursuing Horizontal and Long-Term Relationships with Indigenous Peoples for Archaeological Heritage Management. Canadian Journal of Archaeology. 38:519-540.

Arden, Traci
2002 Conversations about the Production of Archaeological Knowledge and Community Museums at Chunchucmil and Kochol, Yucatan, Mexico. World Archaeology 34(2):379-400.

Asad, Talal
1973 Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter. London: Ithaca Press.

Atalay, Sonya
2012 Community-Based Archaeology: Research with, by and Indigenous and Local Communities. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Atalay, Sonya, Lee Rains Clauss, Randall H. McGuire and John R. Welch
2014 Transforming Archaeology: Activist Practices and Prospects. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.

Brady, Liam M.
2009 (Re)Engaging with the (Un)Known: Collaboration, Indigenous Knowledge, and Reaffirming Aboriginal Identity in the Torres Strait Islands, Northeastern Australia. Collaborative Anthropologies. 2:33-64.

Brighton, Stephen A.
2011 Applied Archaeology and Community Collaboration: Uncovering the Past and Empowering the Present. *Human Organization* 70(4): 344-354.

Bruchac, M.M., S.M. Hart, and H.M. Wobst
2010 Indigenous Archaeologies: A Reader on Decolonization. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Celeste, Ray
2009 Emerging Consensus and Concerns in Collaborative Archaeological Research. Collaborative Anthropologies 2:1-8.

Chilton, E.S. and S.M. Hart
2009 Crafting Collaborative Archaeologies: Two Case Studies From New England. Collaborative Anthropologies 2:87-108.

Clauss, Lee Rains
2014 Betiwixt and Between: Archaeology's Liminality and Activism's Transformative Promise *In*, Transforming Archaeology: Activist Practices and Prospects. New York: Taylor and Francis Group. Sonya Atalay, Lee Rains Clauss, Randall H. McGuire and John R. Welch eds. Pp. 29-45.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip and T.J. Ferguson
2004 Virtue Ethics and the Practice of History: Native Americans and Archaeologists along the San Pedro Valley of Arizona. Journal of Social Archaeology. 4(1):5-27.
2006 Memory Pieces and Footprints: Multivocality and the Meanings of Ancient Times and Ancestral Places among the Zuni and Hopi. American Anthropologist. 108(1):148-162.
2008 Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities. New York: AltaMira Press.

Conkey, Margaret W.
2005 Dwelling at the Margins, Action at the Intersection? Feminist and Indigenous Archaeologies *In* Indigenous Archaeologies: A Reader on Decolonization. Editors Margaret Brucha, Sioban M. Hart and H. Martin Wobst eds. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 91-98.

Easton, Norman Alexander
1994 Totally Tubular: Northern Sciences Most Excellent Adventure. Invited Commentary to Arctic. The Journal of the Artic Institute of North America. 47(1): iii - iv.
2001 Remembering Nelnah – Bessia John. The Northern Review. 23:205-211.
2005 An Ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin. Whitehorse: Northern Research Institute.
2007 Richard Lee's Contributions to Anthropological Understanding of the 'Real" Western Subarctic *Dineh* Culture in the 20th Century. Before Farming 3(1):1-9.

Easton, Norman Alexander and Ruth Gotthard
1984 Archaeological Investigations in the Area about Fort Selkirk, Yukon, Canada. Paper presented to the 40th Arctic Sciences Conference, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 16 September 1989, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Easton, Norman Alexander, Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard
2013 WRFN: Consideration of the Northern Boundary.

Easton, Norman Alexander, Glen R. MacKay, Patricia Bernice Young, Peter Schnurr, and David R. Yesner
2011 Chindadn in Canada? Emergent Evidence of the Pleitocene Transition in Southern Beringia as Revealed by the Little John Site, Yukon. *In*, From the Yenisei to the Yukon: Interpreting Lithic Assemblage Variability in Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene Beringia. Ted Goebel and Ian Buvit eds. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. Pp. 289-307.

Easton, Norman Alexander and Glen R. MacKay
2008 Early Bifacial Points from the Little John Site (KdVo-6), Yukon Territory, Canada. *In*, Projectile Point Sequences in Northwestern North America. R. L. Carlson and M.P.R. Magne eds. Burnaby: Simon Fraser University Press. Pp. 263-282.

Fraser, Max
2009 Little John Country. Whitehorse, YT: Max Fraser Video Productions/Big Day Video Productions. DVD.

Gough, Kathleen
1968 New Proposals for Anthropologists. Current Anthropology 9:403-407.

Greer, Shelley
1995 The Accidental Heritage: Archaeology and Identity in Northern Cape York. Doctoral Dissertation. Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, James Cook University of Townsville.

Greer, Shelley, Rodney Harrison and Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy
2002 Community-based archaeology in Australia. World Archaeology 34(2):265-287.

Hamilakis, Yannis
2011 Archaeological Ethnography: A Multitemporal Meeting Ground for Archaeology and Anthropology. The Annual Review of Anthropology. 40:399-414.

Hamilakis, Yannis and Aris Anagnostopoulos
2009 What is Archaeological Ethnography? Public Archaeology: Archaeological Ethnographies. 8(2-3):65-87.

Hare, Greg and Sheila Greer
1994 *Dedele Mene*: The Archaeology of Annie Lake. Whitehorse: Yukon Heritage Branch.

Harrison, Rodney, and John Schofield.
2009. Archaeo-Ethnography and Auto-Archaeology: Introducing Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past. Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress 5(2):185-209.

La Salle, Marina J.
2010 Community Collaboration and Other Good Intentions. Archaeologies Journal of the World Archaeological Congress. 6(3):401-422.

Lassiter, Luke Eric
2008 Moving Past Public Anthropology and Doing Collaborative Research. NAPA Bulletin 29:70-86.

Marshall, Yvonne, Sasha Roseneil and Kayt Armstrong
2009 Situating the Greenham Archaeology: An Autoethnography of a Feminist Project. Public Archaeology. 2-3:225-245.

Marshall, Yvonne
2002 What is Community Archaeology? World Archaeology. 34(2):211-219

McGuire, Randall H.
2008 Archaeology as Political Action. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

McNiven, Ian J. and Russell, Lynette
2005 Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Menzies, Charles R.
2001 Reflections on Research with, for, and among Indigenous Peoples. Canadian Journal of Native Education. 25(1):19-36.
2015 Oil, Energy, and Anthropological Collaboration on the Northwest Coast of Canada. Journal of Anthropology Research 71:5-21.

Moser, Stephanie, Darren Glazier, James E. Phillips, Lamya Nasser el Nemr, Mohammed Saleh Mousa, Rascha Nasr Aiesh, Susan Richardson, Andrew Conner, and Michael Seymour
2002 Transforming Archaeology through Practice: Strategies for Collaborative Archaeology and the

Community Archaeology Project at Quseir, Egypt. World Archaeology 34(2):220-248.

Nadasdy, Paul
2003 Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal – State Relations in the Southwest Yukon. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Nicholas George P.
1997 Education and empowerment: Archaeology with, for, and by the Shuswap Nation, British Columbia *In,* At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada. G.P. Nicholas and T.D. Andrews eds. Burnaby BC: Archaeology Press. Pp. 85-104.

Nicholas, George P., Amy Roberts, David M. Schaepe, Joe Watkins, Lyn Leader-Elliot and Susan Rowley
2011 A Consideration of Theory, Principles and Practice in Collaborative Archaeology. Archaeological Review from Cambridge 26(2): 11-30)

Nicholas, George P. and J. Hollowell
2008 Ethical Challenges to a Postcolonial Archaeology: The Legacy of Scientific Colonialism. *In*, Archaeology, Capitalism: From Ethics to Politics, Y. Hamilakis and P. Duke eds. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. Pp. 59-82.

Potter, Ben A., Charles E. Holmes, and David Yesner
2013 Technology and Economy among the Earliest Prehistoric Foragers in Interior Eastern Beringia. *Paleoamerican Odyssey* proceedings. College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press. Pp. 463-485.

Silliman , Stephen W. and Katherine h. Sebastian Dring
2008 Working on Pasts for Future:Eastern Pequot Field School Archaeology in Conneticut *In,* Collaborating at the Trowel's Edge: Teaching and Learning in Indigenous Archaeology. Stephen W. Silliman eds. Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press. Pp. 67-87.

Smith, Claire and Heather Jackson
2010 Decolonizing Indigenous Archaeology: Developments from Down Under *In* Indigenous Archaeology: A Reader on Decolonization. Margaret M. Bruchac, siobabn M. Hart and H. Martin Wobst eds. New York: Routledge. Pp. 113-125.

Spector, Janet
1993 What this Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Thomas, David Hurst
2008 Forward *In*, Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities. Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T.J. Ferguson eds. New York: AltaMira Press. Pp. vii-xii.

Tondue, J.M.E., A.M. Balasubramaniam, L. Chavarie, N. Gantner, J.A. Knopp, J.F. Provencher, P.B.Y. Wong and D. Simmons
2014 Working with Northern Communities to Build Collaborative Research Partnerships: Perspectives from Early Career Researchers. Arctic 67(3): 419-429.

Trigger, Bruce G.
1990. The 1990s: North American Archaeology with a Human Face? Antiquity. 64(245):778-787.

VanStone, James W.
1974 Athapaskan Adaptions: Hunters and Fisherman of the Subarctic Forests. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Williams, Raymond
1977 Marxism and Literature. Oxford; Oxford University Press.

Wilson, C. Roderick
2003 The Northern Athapaskans: Overview. *In,* Canda's Changing North. William C. Wonders eds. McGill-Queen's University Press: Canada.

Wylie, Alison
1995 Alternative Histories: Epistemic Disunity and Political Integrity. *In*, Making Alternative Histories: The Practice of Archaeology in non-Western Settings. Peter R. Schmidt ed. Pp. 255-272.
2000 Foreward. In Working together: Native Americans and Archaeologists. K.E. Dongoske, M. Aldenderfer, and K. Dochner eds. Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology. Pp. v-x.

Yellowhorn, Eldon
1993 Since the Bad Spirit became our Master. Dissertation.

Zimmerman, L.J. and R. Echohawk
1990 Ancient History of the Pawnee Nation: A Summary of Archaeological and Traditional Evidence for Pawnee Ancestry in the Great Plains. Manuscript. Native American Rights Fund, Boulder Colorado, and Tribal Office of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Pawnee, Oklahoma.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 51-65

My Protest Body: Encounters with Affect, Embodiment, and Neoliberal Political Economy

Hannah E. Quinn
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I explore my involvement in the Quebec student protest movement through a political economic analysis of the proceedings. I also consider how the inclusion of affect and embodiment theory can build on our understanding of why and how people engage in political activism and social movements. By combining these approaches I ask "what can we learn about the affected body and political dissent?" This exploration of affect and embodiment in the context of neoliberal structures of power does not exist in a vacuum, but draws on a significant body of research that seeks to place the personal within the political, the subjective within the system. While affect and political economy are distinct types of theoretical questions that lead to specific theoretical outcomes, I am interested in how these approaches might play together, and coexist in one academic pursuit. As such, this autoethnography is an exploration in how we can bring in to dialogue a political economy analyses with an analysis of my phenomenological and deeply affected experience of the protest movement, and the visceral and continuous existence of my class consciousness and protest body.

KEYWORDS: affect, embodiment, neoliberalism, political economy, Québec, student protest

Introduction

In the streets, in cafes, in university classrooms, in public parks, and in tiny apartment kitchens, thousands of Québec students and youth became engaged political citizens as a result of their engagement in the 2012 Québec student protest movement. Despite previous participation in protests and demonstrations, this year would mark my explicit entry into the world of political activism, social justice and civil disobedience. Over a 10-month period from November 2011 to September 2012, I would be introduced to the socio-political history of Québec, the political economy of neoliberalism, Marxist notions of revolution and class, and to radical direct democracy. The air was thick with political philosophy and emotion. The streets were filled with, at times, half a million protestors. Our movement was not only about a 75 percent tuition increase, but also about social democratic values, the politics of austerity, and neoliberal economic policies. The success of our protest movement has been debated and contested. Just the same we did stop the proposed tuition increase and the threat of mass protest persists as an effective political strategy in Québec.

As we approach the five year anniversary of one of the largest protest acts in North American history, I find myself asking why? I have frequently explained my participation in the *printemps érable* by addressing the structural forces, including the economic and political climate in Québec, the heritage of strike action and protest by students in Québec, and the global neoliberal project. But as my fingers find patches of skin, once blue with abrasions and inflamed with anger, I wonder how I arrived at my class consciousness. The phantom pain of protest lives in my body, under the surface of my dermis, in my tear-ducts, and as *la chair de poules* that I experience

whenever I hear helicopter blades above me, megaphones in large crowds, and firecrackers at parades. What does a structural political economic analysis of the Québec student protest movement leave out? How might the inclusion of affect and embodiment theory build on our understanding of why and how people get involved in political activism and social movements? By combining these approaches, what can we learn about the affected body and political dissent? This exploration of affect and embodiment in the context of neoliberal structures of power does not exist in a vacuum, but draws on a significant body of research that seeks to place the personal within the political, the subjective within the system. While affect and political economy are distinct types of theoretical questions that lead to specific theoretical outcomes I am interested in how these approaches might play together, and coexist in one academic pursuit. This autoethnography is an exploration in how I can bring in to dialogue a political economy analyses of the 2012 Québec student protest movement with an analysis of my phenomenological and deeply affected experience of the protest movement, and the visceral and continuous existence of my class consciousness and protest body. By drawing on a diverse body of academic work, I find myself engaging in what Desjarlais (1997), Melançon (2014) and Syversten and Bazzi (2015) call 'critical phenomenology,' along with Kathleen Stewart's (2007) affect theory approach based in disconnected but interrelated prose. Therefore, what follows is an attempt to explain affect and embodiment in the context of neoliberal policy in Québec both through the simple structure of the piece and as a theoretical endeavour.

(No) Ordinary Affects

My questions regarding the seemingly incommensurable worlds of an embodied affect approach and a political economy approach emerged upon engagement with Kathleen Stewarts' *Ordinary Affects* (2007). Stewart explores everyday life as "lived on the level of surging impacts" (2007:9) in the context of the United States in the current moment of neoliberalism, globalization, and advanced capitalism (2007:1). In presenting the 'intensity and texture' of life as lived by everyday people going about their everyday lives Stewart argues that studying political and economic structures alone obscures the reality of a "weighted and reeling present" (2007:1) that people embody and experience. Stewart is interested in the lived experience of people who move through the world affected by and affecting others. Her approach, rooted in affect theory and a phenomenological approach to the body and experience, brings to light personal intensities that are related to larger structural forces, *without disclosing or addressing those structural forces*. The prose seems to hang, suspended in air, disconnected from the reality they stem from. I have been inspired by this approach, but nonetheless find myself wondering how we might speak to affect, embodiment and individual experience, without underestimating the importance of a political economic analysis that sheds light on structural violence, historical oppression and inequality that inform and often limit our individual experiences.

Affect theorists are interested in turning our attention to the body as the site of lived experience and felt intensities (Labanyi 2010, Merleau-Ponty 1962, Csordas 1990, 1994), and seek to describe a body that is pre-conceptual and pre-structural (Kimmel 2008:94). Affect, for Massumi, is distinct from emotions insofar as emotions are subjective content, "the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point on what defined as personal" (2002:28). Following Massumi, Mazzarella understands the register of affect to be one of embodied intensity, a corporeal experience that is pre-subjective and impersonal (2009:293). Affect is experienced through the body as "circuits, surges and sensations" (Stewart 2007). While an embodied-affect approach might seem to speak to a decontextualized, limp body that is passively affected and affecting, I follow Stewart in thinking that affective experiences "shimmer with the undetermined potential and the weight of received meaning" (2007:230). Affects, through embodiment, are brought into the present as potentialities and opportunities to respond. The fact of our experience as embodied subjects in the world presupposes "the body as mediator of the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1962:145). Therefore, by embodying affect, by being embodied, I can use my body to act and affect in

return. In *Protesting Like a Girl*, Wendy Parkins suggests that the body is our anchorage in the world "that opens us up to the world and places us in situation there" (2000:60). Thus, if I am to study the protest movement in Québec through my body, I need to understand the situation that my body is anchored in, the world within which my body moves and acts. This is how I can bridge the disconnect between the lived and affected body, and the structural political-economic forces at play. Vignettes relay the affect, my embodiment anchors me in situ, and the political economy detail defines the situation within which I am anchored.

"*Je me souviens, le dix Novembre*"

Tuvalu.

Too-va-loo

Too-vaa-looan

I was walking across a very wet and very slippery campus, repeating this word to myself. I would be presenting a case study in my Environmental Anthropology class in a week on the subsistence fishing and marine rights of the Tuvaluan people for Colin Scott. I had not heard the word 'Tuvalu' out loud, but Professor Scott had just introduced our readings for the next week at the very end of class.

Tuvalu.

Too-va-loo

I had to commit the sound to memory, let the proper pronunciation stick to the front of my brain until the next Thursday. A whole week. I pulled out a sheet of scrap paper and wrote out the phonetics.

Tuvalu, oh to be a Tuvaluan. A tiny island, slowly being swallowed up by the ocean. Your home, hammered by wave upon wave of the salty pacific sea, sinking ever so slowly. Your way of life, dismantled by market forces. Pounded by environmental forces.

To be a Tuvaluan, how horrific.

I walked passed familiar buildings, pondering the disappearing island of Tuvalu. My phone vibrated in my hand.

"Are you on campus?"

The text message was from a close friend.

"Yea, why?"

Tuvalu, too-vah-loo. Wait, was the emphasis on the first or second syllable?

"Come to James Admin"

"Why?"

…No response.

The James Administration Building is the structure that houses the majority of the offices of McGill University's executive staff, including the fifth floor office of the then Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Heather Munroe-Blum. The windows of the 'James Admin' building look out onto a square, bordered by the Arts faculty building, the Engineering department, and Milton Gates, one of the main University entry and exit points. The Milton neighbourhood, also referred to as 'the McGill ghetto' is a close-knit and active community made up of international students, first year students, professors, and long-term community residents. I figured that I would pass by the building, and leave campus via the Milton Gates.

This would not be possible.

James Admin was surrounded by students and professors, linked arm in arm. A human chain had been established and I didn't know why. A crowd of 100 or more people had gathered. People like me, people passing by at the end of class. It was 5 o'clock. There were parents with their children, students, professors, dog-walkers, joggers, people reading their text messages:

"Hannah, I'm on the fifth floor. We're occupying"

The scene was relatively calm. The links in the human chain were silent, facing outwards.

At Milton Gates, red and blue flashing lights were visible. Campus security and police crews had passed in and out of the scene for the past half hour. We could hear loud authoritative voices over megaphones. Twenty confusing minutes passed.

Tu-va-lu. Unconscious mantras.

"What's going on?"

Twenty cold, rainy, frustrating minutes.

I had approached the human chain, I had recognized a group of friends. We exchanged words, we exchanged concerns. What's going to happen? 14 students were upstairs, occupying the fifth floor, protesting the looming tuition hikes.

"Are you up there?!?"

The intrigue overwhelmed me and sank, flooding my stomach with anxiety.

My uncertainty and growing discomfort were met with a distinct and unforgettable reply —

BANG.

A sound grenade.

Disoriented and scared. I turned around in time to catch a unit of 30 or more riot police rush through the narrow Milton Gates and flood the square. They rapped their riot shields with their riot batons, and stopped. 10 feet from the human chain, they stopped.

They did not exchange words with the human chain, nor concerns.

They met protest with power, with fear.

With terror.

They rushed the crowd, slamming their batons on their shields again. Crack. Crack. Crack.

"We're up here. I'm fine. Trying to negotiate with the Provost before the cops get here"

I howled, adding my voice to the cacophony of screams. The rest was chaos. The scene, relatively still and tense, descended into utter confusion. I was cornered, not a link in the chain, but not protected by it either.

I yelled and pleaded, 'Please stop! What are you doing? There are kids here. We're students"

Complicit bystanders.

My lungs were on fire, toxic burning fire.

What was happening?

This would be my first experience of not only a sound grenade, but of tear gas. While I adjusted to the burning in my lungs, I realized I couldn't see. I wasn't crying, but water was pouring out of my eyes. They were tears I would want to cry later, in anger, but couldn't.

The crowd scattered, the human chain reeled with panic.

Breaking the links, they raised their arms up. "This is wrong! What is wrong with you? We're students, we're allowed to be here!"

The riot unit had wedged itself into the crowd of 200. I had been pushed to the engineering building. I leaned against the cold glass, waiting for clarity. My vision returning, I helped to pour water from water bottles into other peoples' eyes, flushing out the toxin, the fire.

But the toxin was in our bodies now, the anger. I held a woman's face in my hands as a man poured water over her electric blue irises. We stayed close to each other, holding on, confused – angry, on fire.

I was on fire. Terror had replaced the taste of pepper spray in my mouth and lungs.

I was learning about my protest body, the body being awakened in me. We all were.

James Admin, the tiny island, hammered by riot police.

Waves of tear gas slamming our shores. Riot shields and riot boots, pounding our bodies.

James Admin, the island sinking in a sea of violence.

Tu-va-lu. Was the emphasis on the first or second syllable?

The occupation of administrative and government buildings was by no means a new tactic used by students to express dissent and disapproval of policy and legislation in Québec political culture (Pineault 2012). The November 10th occupation of the James Administration building at McGill University was also not the first act designed to shed light on the tuition hikes and other austerity measures proposed by the Québec Liberal Party, led by Premier Jean Charest, but would mark a watershed moment in student awareness and involvement in the movement. Jean Charest, a former federal conservative member of parliament under the Mulroney administration, took over the Liberal Party leadership in Québec

in 1998. With a focus on small government, tax cuts and 'tightening the belt' on public spending to reduce the provincial deficit, Charest won the 2003 provincial election with a majority Liberal government (Gattinger and Saint-Pierre 2010:282). Québec politics had been inundated with talk of sovereignty and Québec nationalism for decades, whereas the Charest platform highlighted the importance of modernity, a strong economy, and jobs – a platform that resonated with the growing middle class and Anglophone community. The 2003 election marked the end of nine years of Parti Québécois (PQ) rule and with it, the slow demise of social democracy and the welfare state in Québec more generally, already initiated by the PQ earlier in 2000 (Gattinger and Saint-Pierre 2010:287).

Touting the language of socioeconomic 'modernization,' the 2010 Liberal budget, also called a moment of "cultural revolution" in Québec by the then finance minister (Pineault 2012:38), chipped away at existing public sector spending on health care, education, hydro, and social services. The 75 percent proposed tuition hike included in the 2010 Liberal budget, according to Pineault (2012:38), epitomized the Liberal party's goal of retracting the welfare state and ending decades-long commitment to social democratic values in Québec. The budget sought to attack "the culture of gratuity and entitlement" in Québec (Pineault 2012:38), which had persisted since the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s. Attempts made by preceding governments to increase tuition for University education in Québec had also been met with strikes, protest, and demonstrations, most notably in 1996 and 2005 (Berntson 2014:23). In Québec, the values of social democracy and welfare statism have been supported and maintained by strong civil society engagement on the part of students, labour unions, and sovereigntists (Berntson 2014:23). Pineault argues that the unlimited general student strike action as a 'legitimate form of resistance,' enforced through picket lines and *les manifestations*, has enjoyed unquestioned cultural legitimacy for nearly 50 years in Québec (2012:42). As such, the 2012 student movement would be the most recent manifestation of a culture of student dissent and civil unrest.

As McGrane argues, prior to the Quiet Revolution, Québec society was regulated by a Catholic ethno-religious nationalism, wary of monopoly capitalism and focused on religious destiny, and a collectivist "duty in the nation to aid the weakest" (2007:177). Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Québec's political economy shifted towards an industrialist manufacturing sector, resulting in a dramatic increase in urbanization and multiculturalism (McGrane 2007:192). As McGrane states, "the growth of an industrial and urban population which needed adequate educational and health services to ensure economic growth could simply no longer be supported by the church administered welfare state" (2007:209), resulting in a shift in the 1970s towards nationalist social democracy rooted in Marxism and worker's unions. The Quiet Revolution entrenched strong social democratic values rooted in state-nationalism and "the progressive regulation of industrial conflict, worker's rights and labour organizations" (Pineault 2012:41). As Pineault argues, student movements during the 1970s in Québec resulted in strong ties between labour organizing and student organizing, resulting in student organizations and federations organized in exactly the same manner as Québequois trade unions. Student unions throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s promoted the right to higher education as a public good.

Consequently, with the Liberal budget announcement in 2010, Québec's student unions including the Coalition Large de l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante (CLASSE) began to mobilize and promote strike action throughout the province in the face of neoliberalism and corporatization of the university (Pineault 2012). As the possibility of a general student strike was being organized by student organizers, students took to the streets to fight for affordability and accessibility of education. On November 10th, a group of students who were leaving a protest outside of Charest' office would find their way to the James Administration building at McGill, and proceed to occupy.

On ne lâche pas! We won't back down!

La grève est un droit!

Fuck les liberal, grève generale!

Dehors, les neoliberales! Out with neoliberalism!

My sign read: "Ta Gueule, Charest!" Elloquent. Poignant.

The general strike was called in late February by the members of CLASSE through direct-democratic means. By the 1st of March, over 40,000 students were on strike, nowhere near the 400,000 who would be on strike by the month of May. The strike votes had been cast in the student-led general assemblies at universities all over the province. As Cox and Nilsen argue in *We Make our Own History*, their piece on Marxism and Social movements, the notion of 'winning' in this social movement would rest not only on a tuition freeze, but in our collective human development, "in changing the social relations on a micro-scale; in creating new ways of working" (2014:188). Direct-democracy was being practiced on a massive scale as a counter-movement to the 'movement from above' composed of elites and disengaged politicians (Cox and Nilsen 2014). We were using our bodies in new ways to express the kind of governmentally we were interested in participating in and based on a different "logic of construction" (Zibechi 2010: 3). Physically, we gathered in alternative spaces and cast our strike votes. McGill students were not yet on strike, but I was attending weekly meet-up groups, where we would discuss the right to education, the foundations of free education, social solidarity, the nature of neoliberalism and the potential of protest and direct action. Unconventional spaces beyond the walls of the University had become classroom.

In solidarity, our professors hosted courses off campus to honour the picket line, but as a means of fostering conversation and an opportunity to connect course-content to our reality. We were meeting in cafes, on street corners, and in bars. Protest vocabulary and the language of civil disobedience was exchanged between strangers. Bags of books were strewn on floors: Thoreau, Brinton, Marx, Skocpol, Subcomandante Marcos, Fanon, and Bakunin. I was waiting for the protest to begin, reading a copy of *Statism and Anarchy* by Bakunin (1990), loaned to me by a man with fiery orange hair a week earlier at a kitchen-party learning session. I was underlining provocative ideas in red, my eyes wide with inquisitiveness.

> The modern State is by its very nature a military State; and every military State must of necessity become a conquering, invasive State; to survive it must conquer or be conquered, for the simple reason that accumulated military power will suffocate if it does not find an outlet. [Bakunin 1971:337]

"*Bakunin in the bag*"

We're the outlet.

I sensed the truth of this statement as I waited for the protest to begin on a cold March evening. My skin itched and my tongue became numb as I pondered the black jackets, white helmets, and plexiglass shields of the riot squads.

Military state.

We had been engaged in less than a month of regular strike and protest, and we were met with the full force of the riot police each night.

The crowd, comprised of thousands of students, began to move down Berri street toward Sherbooke street. I closed Bakunin and placed it back in my bag, the content scrolling across my line of vision as we marched.

We walked, we cheered, we sang, we danced. We talked about our plans for the weekend, talked about the upcoming episode of Game of Thrones, and exchanged jokes and ideas about the upcoming nights of protest.

We'd been walking for two hours, engaged in lighthearted conversation with hundreds of new friends and acquaintances.

As we rounded a corner, the atmosphere changed. We were entering a surveilled space, a militarized space. The crowd of thousands, stretching many blocs, fell silent. Mumbling and murmurs could be heard, the occasional profanity, and some concerned facial expressions. I climbed the front

steps of an apartment building to try and catch a glimpse of what was coming, what we were walking towards. Nothing.

Yet, my nose burned, anticipating the unwelcome sting of pepper spray.

Bang. bang. bang. Three sound grenades in a row. My ears rang, but I didn't bend over to puke as I had in previous weeks of protest. My body was acclimatizing to the bangs. They didn't make me dizzy anymore, I recovered from the confusion more quickly.

I conquer you.

Our collective heart rate slowed. Anticipation was building. We stopped walking and began looking around. The atmosphere became more frantic.

An unfamiliar sound flooded my ear drums, clop — clop —– clop

Faster now. Clop. Clop. Clop. Clop.

Hundreds of screams rang out. To our left, a wall of pure muscle and mammalian might crashed against the east side of our group. 20 big brown horses, carrying 20 armoured cops slammed the side of the march. Bodies scattered, shrieking in fear. The horses jumped up and down, neighing and pounding the pavement. My body exploded with panic. Would they do that? Would they risk trampling peaceful protestors? All in the name of control?

Military state. Conquer or be conquered.

My body is the outlet. My ideology is the outlet.

I grabbed people, looking for my friends. We had scattered. My eyes burned with hot peppery tears, again. I found myself alone, in a street that was becoming increasingly empty. The crowd was being kettled, but somehow I had been separated. I ran towards the kettle, feeling Bakunin thrasing around in my bag as I ran. Fixed on the kettle crowd ahead, and the line of horses approaching me from behind, I sprinted. Out of nowhere, I was on the ground on my back. Bakunin pressing against my spine. A cop pulled me up by the jacket, "calisse tes con" (stupid fucking idiot).

"Va t'en" (get out of here) he shouted.

"Why!?" I replied.

He pulled me over to the cop car, and pressed me against the hood of the car and placed me so that I was bent over, face down on the car. Undignified, mortified, horrified.

He held me by my belt and the back of my jeans.

Who is this person, and who does he think he is?

He is the state. I am the outlet. Bakunin was wrestles in my backpack.

He bound my hands with a plastic zip-tie and said, 'will you be quiet now?'

I looked up at him, seething. I searched for his eyes behind the visor.

Does this monster have eyes? Can this monster see me?

All I could do was bare my teeth. "Asshole. Get your hands off me. Lache-moi! Stop touching me, I'm allowed to be here. I'm allowed to hate Charest and to hate you!

He pushed me and I fell to the ground. He stared at me a long time. It was hard to distinguish what he was directing towards me: disgust? hatred? sympathy? He kept staring….

Just say something.

His partner took him by the shoulder, and they turned to walk towards the kettle, a now distant racket three city blocks away.

I was kneeling, my hands tied, and my tongue bleeding.

My protest body, learned in Marxism and neoliberalism, reeled. My dissenting body

Another officer approached me, I winced as he bent over me. Snip - Snip.

He undid my zip-tie restraints. "Go home, ma fille"….No.

> *We positioned our bodies towards the kettle, well, let's go then. I walked 3 feet behind him.*
>
> *3 feet behind this man who would be inflicting pain on me in a few moments time. For now we just walked, I held my side, cradled my ribcage, cradled my backpack. Cradling Bakunin.*
>
> *Bakunin was wrong. It was not about the state and its outlet.*
>
> *It was about the monster. The man who aggressed me and shamed me in a compromising position up against a police car. This was about what neoliberalism does to each of us, to people. The dehumanizing process of commodification that had made us monsters to each other tonight, like every other night. His Bakunin body. Our violent bodies, porous and sharing anger, frustration and exhaustion.*

Here, we find my protest body in contact with the bodies of others, with a system, and with violence. Our embodied experience of the system, of the structures of power at play, impact how we interact and how we understand the social world that we are both occupying in that moment (Tapias 2006, 2015). Tapias argues that to understand society, we need to first examine the lived-in body, because one knows about the world through the body (2006). The Bakunin vignette reveals an embodied experience of violence that is visible through the remaining bruises, as well as the anger that motivated my continued participation in the movement. By engaging my body in this kind of protest, I am "assuming bodily demands and risks" (Sutton 2010:162). An examination of my protest body would reveal scars and wounds, muscles that are quick to tighten under threat, muscles that are tired and sore, dark circles under my eyes, a pepper-spray induced cough. An examination of the riot cop's body would not reveal the same wounds, the same inflictions. Our embodied experience of the protest produces and reveals different embodied inscriptions. By looking at our bodies, we can understand something about society in that moment. By looking at our bodies in relation to each other, we can understand something about social relation in our society in that moment, we embody social suffering and violence in distinctly different ways throughout the protest process (Tapias 2006). As the dissenter, I deploy my body into violent encounters to achieve anti-neoliberal political ends, leading to a body that is, as Barbara Sutton states, the "interface of powers of resistance" (2007:139).

The notion that the body knows the world and that society is inscribed on the body stems from a seminal piece on the phenomenological body by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock wherein bodies can be indicators of suffering, inequality, marginalization, and protest. In *The Mindful Body* (1987) Scheper-Hughes and Lock present a tripartite body composed of the individual body, the social body, and the body politic. The individual body is the "lived-experience of the body-self" (1987:7); much like the body described by Merleau-Ponty, Massumi, and Labanyi. The social body refers to the body as a symbol, the body that is "good to think with" and that helps us to understand cultural phenomena and structures (1987:18). The body politic, individual and collective, is defined as "the regulation, surveillance, and control of bodies" (1987:7). In the body politic, we see a body that is entangled with the material and the political (Labanyi 2010:223). Willen, a phenomenological anthropologist working on concepts of illegality and migrant workers in Israel, further conceptualizes the body politic as a body that is part of a larger social order, "through which social processes can act with and upon its constituents to (re) produce itself" (2011:161). By mobilizing my protest body against the State and its policies, I sought to destabilize this reproduction of the social order.

Additionally, McAllister describes the body as a site of resistance, and as a functional force "that can disrupt the social order and shape new patterns of intellectual and bodily action" (2010:10). The phenomenologist, Jerome Melançon also argues that "the body is inscribed in society and in political processes, which affect thinking just as much as the corporeal character of existence" (2014:2). Here, we can see how the tripartite understanding of the body can be mobilized to discuss a body in relation to society, or a body moving within a structure and being informed by the boundaries of that structure. As social bod-

ies, the riot cop is an appendage of the structure, I was a foreign object lodged in the structure's throat. Through force and violence, he seeks to use his body to tear apart the tissue that binds the protest movement together, to pull apart the sinew and ligaments that make up our solidarity. As a protest-body in the neoliberal political economy, I seek to resist that structure-as-body, to attack it where it is weak. Our affective and embodied experiences are delineated by the system, a kind of neoliberal affect.

We might imagine a set of neoliberal affects, or a neoliberal affective atmosphere (Anderson 2009, 2015), that seeks to modulate our collective affect, and prime it for neoliberal activity rooted in competition, individualism, privatization, isolation, hostility, apathy, disconnection, and alienation. If a neoliberal political economy is founded on economic logics and the rational free market, then in a way, it seeks to regulate or extinguish embodied affective experiences of empathy, community, collectivization, love, and joy. Anderson argues that affective atmospheres, neoliberal or otherwise, are "pressing" and "enveloping" society from all sides (2009:77). As protest body, motivated by my affective experience of austerity and corporatization, my role is to enact and embody an alternative to neoliberal policy and society – a protest affect. As Cox and Nilsen argue, "the role of movements from below is placing neoliberalism in crisis and undermining its hegemony" (2014:160). Here, we can see how neoliberalism hegemony lies not only its economic force, but in its ability to curate an affective atmosphere that further regulates how our bodies can experience the world. My body politic, surveilled, aggressed and regulated by the neoliberal state, resisted. First and foremost, my protest body engaged in acts of rage, love and joy, and community. The power of our community, as a kind of social machine (Zibechi 2010) rested in our shared valourization of protest affect. With continued involvement, I fell into "affectual attunement" (Massumi 2005) with my protest peers. Students, working class men and women, professors, grandparents, and allies built new subjectivities from a shared ground, a shared affective atmosphere that countered the regulatory pressures of neoliberal affect (Anderson 2009).

Our struggle was not just about a $1500 difference in tuition, but about the political economic regime that was threatening our shared social values, first through economic means, and then through state sanctioned violence. David Harvey in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), presents a thorough and compelling discussion on the rise and nature of neoliberal economics and politics that informed many of my and my colleagues' global and structural understanding of our dissent. Harvey defines neoliberalism as a "theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (2005:2). As such, the role of the state is to create and preserve the political economic practices aimed at deregulation, privatization, state retraction, and financialization, and to "set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets" (2005:2). It was this 'force' that I was encountering each night in downtown Montreal. Nose to nose with riot cops, we engaged with the enforcers, the body politic that had been put in place by the Liberal government to quell our anger and to protect the integrity of the neoliberal project.

As Harvey explains, the capitalist world 'stumbled towards neoliberalization' from the 1950s, into the 1980s, wherein the 'new orthodoxy' was articulated through the policies and approaches of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and crystallized in the *Washington Consensus* in the mid-1990s (2005:13). Like Thatcher, Charest began confronting and limiting trade union power and dismantling social solidarity that had been built over nearly four decades. In the 1990s, Lucien Bouchard's Parti Québécois had held regular summits that united the government with businesses, trade unions and community groups, with "the goal of the collective process being to hammer out a fiscal consensus" (Pineault 2012:39). Charest sought to undermine this solidarity by

pitting the groups and sectors against each other through clever rhetoric, framing unionized workers as "privileged wage earners," etc. (Pineault 2012:39). Dismantling social solidarity was central to what Harvey calls "the financialization of everything" that typifies the neoliberal project, where finance takes hold of all areas of the economy, the state, and daily life (2005:33). Along with this general trend towards the commodification of goods and services by the neoliberal state, Harvey suggests that larger and larger segments of the population become exposed to impoverishment and risk as the state withdraws from the welfarist provision of services such as health care, social programs and education (2005:76). Since the 1960s, Quebecers supported the notion that "no qualified student should be denied a university education on financial grounds" (Bhardwaj 2010:12). The neoliberal government had threatened this social value, and we were prepared to meet the threat every night in the streets. As Harvey explains, the neoliberal state will resort to coercive and policing tactics, in our case riot squads that seemed to multiply each night, to repress opposition (2005:77). The monster behind the visor was this surveillance force and "coercive arm of the state [that] is augmented to protect corporate interests and, if necessary, to repress dissent (Harvey 2005:77).

Violent clashes with disciplinary forces such as riot squads are not unique to the *printemps érables* or neoliberal states, but have marked dozens of recent social movements that have sought to confront the attack on social values by neoliberal states, and the substitution of corporate welfare for people welfare (Harvey 2005:47). As Cox and Nilsen explain, the Zapatista movement, the 'water wars' in Bolivia, the battle in Seattle, the Arab Spring, Occupy Movement, are all movements that have sought to address the reality of poverty, and the core tenets of neoliberalism, addressing "a massive and sustained presence on the world stage of a collective action from below of a very dramatic kind, and a powerful undermining of neoliberal hegemony" (2014:161). Under neoliberal logic, my violent encounters with riot squads had become normalized, if not invisible to the media. As the dissenter, the occupier, the protestor, I was threatening a 'movement from above,' the hegemonic hold of neoliberal ideals aimed at advancing the aspirations of an elite and exclusive segment of the population. The democratic process, or government by majority rule, is "profoundly suspicious" (Harvey 2005:66) to neoliberal elites, who seek to protect their individual rights and liberties. The Québec Liberals, supported by these elites, would stop at nothing to quell our democratic voice from below. On the 18th of May 2012, *La loi speciale,* or Law 78, came into effect as an attempt to significantly limit our ability to protest in public space by making demonstrations of more than 50 people illegal without the proper permits. This attack on democracy and the freedom to assemble only mobilized us further. On the 100th day of protest, almost half a million people flooded the downtown core. We embodied our political ideals, our protest affect and sought to affect others in a massive way.

"*Red Nails, Red Squares, Red Revolutions*"

My hands, clasped around a porcelain coffee cup, were trembling. My nails were a deep crimson colour. I had painted them late the night before. The sound of helicopters buzzing above my apartment in the cold April air had kept me awake, as it had for the past month. Red, the colour of my class consciousness.

I sat across from one of my closest friends, a loud and vivacious Quebecois woman, who donned her red lips now the way I donned my red nails.

Mmmm. I was eating a cherry-turnover. I licked my fingertips to pick up the chunks of crystallized sugar off my plate. That poor pastry never had a chance. I devoured it. A streak of the sweet cherry filling was all that was left on the white dish. I was pleased.

"What time is it?"

"We have an hour or so still."

"Good, I'm exhausted. Do you want more coffee?"

We had met at one of our favourite coffee shops, Pekarna, on the corner of Atwater and St-Catherine street. We would be meeting our

friends in about an hour at Berri-Uqam metro for the evening protest. We were in the west end of town, pavement less imbued with protest philosophy, buildings that did not echo the sound of chanting and hollering, air that was not thick with anger and relations of power. The stain of 'student angst' had not sullied this neighbourhood. But the helicopters buzzed over downtown regardless of where the locus of protest lived.

I was buying my second coffee, considering a second cherry turnover as well.

"Hey, back the fuck up man…" – a French-Canadian English accent I knew all too well.

I spun around to see my friend, standing up with her arm stretched out towards two young men.

"Leave me alone," she yelled, "I'm allowed to be here, I'm not doing anything to you."

The cafe – white and purple, with ornate tables and chairs, a glass case for delicate cakes and pastries, and Parisian music playing over the sound system – fell silent.

"Get a life, get out of here – carre-rouge bitch!"

I placed my body between them, "Okay, enough!… get out of here"

"You get out, don't you have a protest to be at, entitled pricks."

"Arrete man, c'est fini!" I argued.

My hands, clasped around a porcelain coffee cup, were trembling. This was not the first time we had been called out, donning our red squares, red nails, red lips. We were students, we were protesting. I wore black military boots every day. I wore a red bandana around my neck or in my hair everywhere, every day. A wet bandana wrapped around your nose and mouth works wonders when tear gas canisters are deployed. My protest gear. My protest body.

"I'm so sick of explaining this to people."

I said, "I'm just tired. I need to sleep. I fought with my dad on the phone until 1, maybe 2am. I was trying to explain to him why, as a blue-collar worker, what we're doing here shouldn't surprise him. In his eyes, we are entitled and selfish students. I want him to understand that this is about all of us, that the same government that has tried to pry open his union's collective agreement is trying to corporatize my university. These are not isolated events.

Lionel Groulx, a prominent Catholic priest and Québec Nationalist during the 1950s and 1960s, was adamant that the French-Canadian nation was a classless entity characterized by the unity and homogeneity of its constituent parts (McGrane 2007:177). This rhetoric was mobilized to justify a religio-ethnic unity foundational to the separatist agenda. However, as McGrane states, a "Francophone working class developed alongside the Anglophone managerial class and a financial elite class" with the industrial changes that came about during the 1950s (2007:182). By the time I began to participate in the student protests during the spring of 2012, the movement had already been defined as a popular struggle based on class consciousness by CLASSE, and other student organizations. Through the protest process and my political engagement, I began to understand how neoliberalism is a class project, or as Harvey states, that

> redistributive effects and increasing social inequality have in fact been such a persistent feature of neoliberalization as to be regarded as structural to the whole project … neoliberalization was from the very beginning a project to achieve the restoration of class power. [2005:16]

Class was not a concept that I was familiar with prior to the student protests. The process of embodied political engagement with ritualized protest introduced me to my own class consciousness.

As a distinct class, or "stable social group defined by a specific social condition and culture (Husu 2013:16), we were defined by a common appreciation for education as a social good, a right. We were concerned about rising unemployment rates among youth, increasing debt burdens and the commodi-

fication of social services. As a class, a community, a collective, we would be profoundly limited by increased financialization and corporatization. The tuition hike was our call to action. In the face of riot brigades, tear gas, sound grenades and rubber bullets, we found strength and purpose in our cohesion, or as James Scott argues, we found high levels of internal cohesion as a result of the physical danger of our project (Zibechi 2010:18), and our shared experience of our social class and position in Québec society. By nurturing our class consciousness, the protest movement fostered new social relations and the possibility for a new world to emerge. As Zibechi argues, Marx affirmed that the "concentration of workers caused by the development of capitalism creates the conditions for their unity, based on self-education, and argued that this unity would erode the basis of bourgeois domination" (2010:30). In Québec, the neoliberal conditions had awakened in many of us an awareness of an elite class and an economic system that favoured the financial and corporate sectors. From this set of neoliberal relations, the social relations among the student-class flourished. As Cox and Nilsen argue, the image that Marx offers us "of revolutionary change is that of latent power that lies dormant within the world of the oppressed, and grows out like a flower" (2014:188). Over the course of 10 months, Québec students emerged as class of militant subjects, taking control of their political agency and bodies in the neoliberal structure. We could be identified by our red squares, our bandanas, our combat boots, our picket signs, and our presence at marches, sit-ins, meet-ups, and demonstrations. Our class consciousness was rooted in a desire to "shows the importance of building communal, municipal, and regional autonomy, from below (Zibechi 2010:1) and eventually, ousting a neoliberal government that did not represent our values and ideals.

My class consciousness was experienced and performed through and with my body, in communion with the bodies of others. For me, the development of class consciousness necessitated a body that could be affected, that could mobilize in acts of dissent, and be affected by the body politic and structural forces. My social position within the politico-economic structure oozed out of my pores, and was inscribed on my body not only as the cuts on my shins and my swollen lip (elbowed in the face by a fellow protestor), but as the red paint on my nails, the red bandana in my hair, and the red felt square pinned to my shirt. These adornments, the material elements of my performance, were the conduit through which I expressed that which had affected me, my embodied experience made visible. Similarly, Kimmel states that, "what takes place inside the living flesh is an interface between external stimuli, what we know, and, more fundamentally, what we are" (2008:95). I was my protest body. I performed my class-conscious protest body, and was "radically open to the world" (Labanyi 2010:225), despite the continuous attempts to control my body by the state, the media, and elite bodies.

In terms of embodied performance, and the performance of politics, Jeffrey Juris (2008) suggests that protests are characterized by high ritual density, "resulting from the bodily awareness of co-presence among ritual participants who are physically assembled and share a mutual focus of attention" (65). Our embodied class consciousness necessitated the repeated engagement in the protest ritual. Being together, we maintained an affective atmosphere rooted in anger and shared frustration by performing our class consciousness (Anderson 2009). The movement was successful because it was able to harness an embodied experience of terror and convert it into a coherent and shared consciousness that was practiced, performed, and entrenched through encounters with state violence. We were all profoundly changed in the process of performance, allowing our bodies to be physically altered, and open to mutual affective exchange. The protest movement gave words to affect, gave structure to shared intensities and surges, which fostered "affective solidarity" (Juris 2008:65) that made us feel powerful against the neoliberal state and to engage in ritual, performative, militant confrontation with other bodies. As Juris argues, it is through this performance that "new meanings, values and identities are produced, embodied and publicly communicated within social movements" (2014:227). Consequently, my class consciousness was learned and produced through embodied engagement with the protest movement and via the sharing and reproduction of affective atmospheres with other dis-

senting protest bodies. Our collective embodiment was a sacrifice, wherein the body appears as "the most basic and ordinary thing one can offer … but at the same time, this bodily offer constitutes a supreme act because the body is the essential stuff of existence" (Sutton 2007:146). We sacrificed our bodies together and, in doing so, learned a class consciousness that lives on in our bodies, and not just in our political-economic understanding of the protest movement.

"*Memories in the Underground*"

> *I was riding on the metro on a muggy September afternoon. I was back in school. A provincial election had been announced. As we pulled out of the station, a noticed a black backpack with a red felt square pinned to the front pocket on the floor in the corner of the metro car. I hadn't noticed who had put it there or for how long it had been there. I watched my reflection in the metro window and felt my skin get hot. Panic blurred my vision. I have to get off this train. What if it's a…*
>
> *– This was the legacy of my encounters with neoliberalism, state power, and political protest.*
>
> *My body seized, clenching with fear, swimming in the red, but electrified by a deep sense of justice and awareness: my protest body.*

Conclusion

My body is where the memory of the 2012 Québec student protest movement continues to live. I am continuously affected by the memory, motivated by the lived intensity and embodied experience, resulting in my continuous and ever-present protest body. I am marked, and I have marked. As Merleau-Ponty argues,

> my body is made of the same flesh as the world… this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world. They are in a relation of transgression and of overlapping. [1969:248]

This autoethnography has provided me with the opportunity to explore how a political economic approach and an embodied-affect approach can speak to each other, and improve upon the findings of the other. As I seek to navigate these two theoretical approaches, I can conclude that they are not as incommensurable as presumed but are, in effect, mutually reinforcing. By mobilizing Scheper-Hughes and Lock's notion of the tripartite body, we can explore the relationship between the phenomenological body as lived-experience, and its relationship to powerful structures through the body politic. My protest body emerged only in response to an intensely affective experience that was harnessed and reinforced by a social movement, which transformed my affect into a shared affective atmosphere, a class consciousness. By performing protest affect and class consciousness through my body, the original intensity was maintained and buttressed, allowing for my continued engagement in the movement. Our engagement involved the on-going collision and negotiation of embodied actors in different spheres of influence and power (McAllister 2010:27) and the legacy of those interactions persists as embodied memory. I was profoundly affected by provincial politics and neoliberal policies, and my embodied dissent against the structure allowed me to affect others implicated in the system as well.

The work that I have done here is not unique within the discipline, but represents the ongoing struggle of marrying the local with the global, the specific with the general, the subjective with the objective, the structural with the affective. This auto ethnographic endeavour has allowed me to understand how my agency – my protest body – arises out of "the experience of embodiment located and engaged in specific material and historical situation" (Parkins 2000:62). Consequently, anthropologists such as Desjarlais (1997) and Syversten and Bazzi (2015) have sought to explicitly link affect, embodiment, and political economy in what they deem a kind of "critical phenomenology." In their work, much as in mine, they see embodied lives as constrained by structural forces, and attempt to use the phenomenological body as a site and process where we can bridge the divide between subjective and structural dimensions of experience (Syversten and Bazzi 2015:186). As such, embodiment and affective experience are to be described thickly, and located in

time, place, and context to link the phenomenal and the political, the neoliberal state and my protest body. The structure of this autoethnography has allowed me to not only suspend two theoretical approaches within the same text document, but to bring them into dialogue, and to find myself in the thick of a critical phenomenological approach, that, in future, can be articulated in an ethnographic approach that is personal, evocative, and visceral, yet situated, contextualized, and shedding light on structural inequalities and political economic forces.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Ben

2009 Affective Atmospheres. Emotion, Space and Society 2:7–81.

2015 Neoliberal Affects. Progress in Human Geography, 1-20.

Bakunin, Mikhail

1971 Bakunin on Anarchy. Sam Dolgoff, translator. New York: Vintage Books.

Bernston, Jennifer

2014 Marching to a Different Drum: The Casserole Protests of the Québec Student Movement, 2011-2012. Masters Thesis, Carleton University.

Bhardwaj, Punita

2010 Neoliberalism and Education: A Case Study on Québec Department of Integrated Studies in Education. Masters dissertation, McGill University.

Cox and Nilsen

2014 We Make Our Own History: Marxism and Social Movements in the Twilight of Neoliberalism. Pluto Press.

Csordas, Thomas J.,

1990 Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. Ethos, 18(1):5-47

1994 Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self. Cambridge University Press.

Desjarlais, Robert R.

1997 Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gattinger and Saint-Pierre

2010 The Neoliberal Turn in Provincial Culture Policy and Administration in Québec and Ontario.: The Emergence of Quasi-Neoliberal Approaches. Canadian Journal of Communication 35:279-302.

Harvey, David

2005 A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Oxford University Press.

Husu, Hanna-Mari

2013 Social Movements and Bourdieu: Class, Embodiment and the Politics of Identity. Dissertation produced for the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Jyväskylä.

Juris, Jeffrey
2008 Performing Politics: Image, Embodiment, and Affective Solidarity During Anti-Corporate Globalization Protests. Ethnography 9(1):61–97.
2014 Embodying Protest: Culture and Performance within Social Movements. *In* Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research. B. Baumgarten, P. Daphi and P. Ulrich, eds. Pp 227-250. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Kimmel, M.
2008 Properties of Cultural Embodiment: Lessons from the Anthropology of the Body. *In* Body, Language and Mind (Vol. 2). Interrelations Between Biology, Linguistics and Culture. R. Dirven, R. Frank, T. Ziemke and J. Zlatev, eds. Pp. 77-108. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Labanyi, Jo
2010 Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality. Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies. 11(3-4):223-233.

Massumi, Brian
2002 Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Duke University Press.
2005 Fear (the spectrum said). Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique 13(1):31-48.

Mazzarella, Wiliam
2009 Affect: What is it Good for? *In* Enchantment of Modernity: Empire, Nation, Globalization. Saurabh Dube, ed. Pp. 291-309. Abingdon UK: Routledge.

McAllister, Courtney
2010 Dissenting Body: Power, Space, and Violence in Embodied Acts of Resistance. Masters Thesis in International Performance Research. Warwick University.

McGrane, David
2007 From Traditional to Third Way Social Democracy: The Emergence and Evolution of Social Democratic Ideas and Policies in Saskatchewan and Québec in the 20th Century. Masters Thesis, Carleton University.

Melançon, Jerome
2014 Thinking Corporeally, Socially, and Politically: Critical Phenomenology after Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu. Bulletin d'analyse phénoménologique 10(8).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice
1962 The Phenomenology of Perception. London: Routledge.
1969 The Visible and The Invisible. Northwestern University Press.

Parkins, Wendy
2000 Protesting Like a Girl: Embodiment, Dissent and Feminist Agency. Feminist Theory, SAGE Publications 1(1):59-78.

Pineault, Eric
2012 Québec's Red Spring: An Essay on Ideology and Social Conflict at the End of Neoliberalism. Studies in Political Economy 90:29-56

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Margaret M. Lock
1987 The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. Medical Anthropology Quarterly 1(1):6–41.

Stewart, Kathleen
2007 Ordinary Affects. Duke University Press.

Sutton, Barbara
2007 Naked Protest: Memories of Bodies and Resistance at the World Social Forum. Journal of International Women's Studies 8(3):139-148.

Syvertsen, Jennifer L. and Angela Robertson Bazzi
2015 Sex Work, Heroin Injection, and HIV Risk in Tijuana: A Love Story. Anthropology of Consciousness 26(2):182–194

Tapias, Maria
2006 Emotions and the Intergenerational Embodiment of Social Suffering in Rural Bolivia. Medical Anthropology Quarterly, 20(3):399-415.
2015 Embodied Protests: Emotions and Women's Health in Bolivia. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Willen, Sarah S.
2011 Do "Illegal" Im/migrants Have a Right to Health? Engaging Ethical Theory as Social Practice at a Tel Aviv Open Clinic. Medical Anthropology Quarterly 25(3):303-330.

Zibechi, Raul
2010 Dispersing Power: Social Movements as Anti-State Forces. AK Press.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 66-76

Dissent in Zion: Outsider Practices in Utah

Ezra Anton Greene
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: Most communities in Utah are predominately Mormon, and Mormon practices and beliefs strongly influence practices in everyday society and culture. Yet, there also many non-Mormons who live in Utah. Through analyzing the independent documentary film *The Beaver Kid* and autoethnography of the author's own experience growing up in Utah as a non-Mormon, this essay explores the influence that Mormon practices and beliefs have on "outsiders" in the communities. Concepts from practice theory such as doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and communities of practice are used to understand how outsiders resist the dominant social norms, while also being influenced to abide by them.

KEYWORDS: Utah, Mormons and Non-Mormons, practice theory, autoethnography

The Beaver Kid, the first film of the *Beaver Trilogy* (Harris 2001), opens in a parking lot. A shot from a handheld video camera wildly spins across the ground before stabilizing and finding a focus. A thin, young man with airy blonde hair, bell bottoms, and a black sweatshirt with thick red and yellow stripes holds a camera. He snaps photographs of Salt Lake City's Channel 2 Sky 2 News Helicopter. An impromptu interview begins between the man filming the scene and the young man. At first the words are inaudible. A microphone is handed over. A documentary begins.

Without much prompting apart from being on camera, the young man, who says his handle is Groovin' Gary, breaks into a stream of impressions – John Wayne, Sylvester Stallone, Barry Manilow. He is unwilling to do his best impression, Olivia Newton John, because he does not have his backup. The camera excites him. He keeps talking about how great it would be to "make the tube." He's "hamming it up" for "TV land." He wants to tell his mom he "got on the set." He bursts into haa-haas frequently. Trent Harris, the film's director, questions the young man about where he is from: Beaver, Utah. Gary describes himself as "Beaver Little Rich" and says that Beaver is "just kind of a town where you drag Main at night and go to school in the daytime." He says he knows a lot of people who "are really great people." He is twenty-one so he is beyond the age of going to school and has moved on to working for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Groovin' Gary has something about him that is endearing and captivating and makes you want to know more. Starlee Kine (2002) who put together the *This American Life* radio act "Action! Action! Action!" about the *Beaver Trilogy* asks, "Don't you love this kid? You love him but you don't know why you love him." She loves that someone thought up a character that is so excited to be taking pictures of a news helicopter, and she was shocked and pleased to learn

he was a real person – not a character. I am drawn to Groovin' Gary for different reasons. In him, I see something of myself, or, at least, I see a kid who grew up in similar conditions and a similar place to me. The film was not intended to be an anthropological film and most would not consider it to be explicitly so, but it has elements that provoke anthropological questions. I see a young man who I want to know more about and wonder about the social and cultural setting of where he came from and how he really fit in there. Where is Beaver and what is this place with really great people? I wonder if they see Groovin' Gary as really great – especially as the film continues into its latter half. I wonder if, perhaps, Gary's impersonations and love of American celebrities and desire to be on TV are an expression of wanting more than Beaver offers.

In this essay, I contemplate these inquiries by exploring my own experience growing up in Utah to provide context for the social and cultural setting that likely has similarities to that which Gary experienced in Beaver. I situate myself within the framework of Utahan, predominately Mormon, culture and society as an outsider and suggest that Groovin' Gary may similarly have felt like an outsider. My usage of the term *outsider* refers to someone who feels detached from the socio-cultural norms within a community, including prevailing religious and political outlooks. This includes 'strangers' who actually come from different locales with different socio-cultural practices (see Simmel 1950; Hage 2006), but my usage also refers to those from the same locale as insiders. What distinguishes one as an outsider is feeling distanced, even separated, from the norms seen as 'our way of doing things' by insiders. Drawing upon practice theory, I extend my analysis to contemplate how actions were taken by me to define my own position, as an outsider, within Utahan culture and suggest that this is what Groovin' Gary is grappling with in his desire to impersonate others and find a place for himself "on the tube." Defining one's position and identity is often a struggle in Utah where social and institutional pressures, strongly influenced by the Mormon Church, create a strong impetus to act and behave in certain ways which can conflict with individual inclinations. Based on my experience and my analysis of Groovin' Gary's performance in *The Beaver Kid*, I argue that the majority of Utahans act and behave within expected Mormon norms, but there is a strong current of non-Mormons and fringe Mormons that test these norms, typically in rather mundane ways but occasionally in poignant performances. Historical, sociological, and anthropological research suggests that the practices of this minority, bolstered by wider American society, have influenced society and culture in Utah. Yet, Mormonism's influence remains strong and can powerfully overwhelm those who seek to test what is possible.

I first provide a brief history of the development of Utah's Mormon social and cultural structure. This leads into summarizing practice theory, which theoretically situates my analysis and arguments. Throughout the rest of the essay, I interweave my own experiences growing up in Utah with an examination of what Groovin' Gary might have experienced in his life, referring to concepts from practice theory to consider how our practices might be generalizable to those of other outsiders in Utah.

Historical Development of Utah's Mormon Social and Cultural Structure

The opening scene of *The Beaver Trilogy* does not have any moment that really stands out that suggests Groovin' Gary is very much different from any other young man or that Utah is all that different than any other place in the United States. Gary is eccentric and outgoing, but his actions are not shockingly out of the ordinary – he could be any kid in America. At face value, most communities in Utah similarly fit into the American cultural landscape without standing out in stark contrast. In fact, based on what I have heard living outside of Utah, many people might be shocked by how *normal* Utah is; I have never known a polygamist and do not know anyone who has. Communities are filled with houses and apartment buildings and schools along streets in rectilinear grids. City centers have older brick buildings occupied by long standing local businesses and sometimes an old movie theater. Spreading out on main streets from the city center, department stores, fast-food eateries, and gas stations operate. One difference people might note is the high number of churches, not churches from different

denominations but churches that all look very much the same: big and broad with a lot of roof rising to an apex, topped with a white block and pyramid steeple.

The people living and working in the buildings go about their days like many other Americans. They work in the wide variety of jobs necessary to make communities function. They drive cars, play sports, watch movies, and go to school. The influence and pervasiveness of Mormon doctrine and beliefs throughout Utahan communities is not evident at first glimpse and likely one would have to integrate into a community – like an anthropologist – to recognize Mormonism's reach, as I was from birth. Here, I situate that influence by providing a brief historical summary of how Utah was settled by Brigham Young and his followers and grew to be a Mormon Zion.

Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church) in 1830 in New York State. He published the Book of Mormon, which he said was a translation through divine revelation of golden plates that he had received from the angel Moroni. This book is canonical scripture for Mormons and claims "to be the record of the ancient inhabitants of the New World" (Vogt 1955:1164). Converts to the new religion soon clashed with non-Mormons about their beliefs, polygamous practices, and communal living style. From 1830 to 1846, followers of the faith moved several times from New York to Ohio to Missouri to Illinois. In 1844, problems with gentiles flared out of control, and Smith was jailed by authorities for his polygamous marital practice and then was murdered by a mob in Nauvoo, Illinois. After a short period of inner turmoil within the church ranks and jockeying for power, Brigham Young took over leadership of the majority of LDS members and sought a homeland free of strife.[1]

In 1847-1848, Mormon pioneers led by Young settled near the Great Salt Lake and began to establish communities along the Wasatch Front mountain range in northern Utah. They began developing the land as farmland and soon prospered in the desert. Young worked quickly to settle other areas of the "intermontane region" of the United States and had missions established from Arizona and New Mexico to Idaho and Montana (Vogt 1955:1165). The region grew steadily in population as the Mormon doctrine of "Gathering" encouraged new converts to take up Mormon ideals and faith and migrate to the Utah territory – an earthly Zion – to be in the same community as other believers. Missionizing efforts in Europe were particularly successful and many converts came to Utah from Great Britain and Scandinavia (Eliason 1997:178). The "Gathering" persisted until the 1920s when Mormon leadership revised the doctrine to encourage converts to live a Mormon lifestyle in their existing residence – Zion as an ideal – rather than migrating to Utah where the desert environment struggled to support further population increase (Phillips and Cragun 2013:79–80).

By the 1930s, the Mormon population in most of Utah had become a dominant majority and has continued to be so until the present.[2] Rick Phillips and Roger Cragun (2013) write that the LDS faith and lifestyle in what they call the "Mormon Culture Region" (MCR) is substantially different than other LDS communities throughout the world in that Mormons in the MCR attend church more often, are more densely concentrated throughout entire communities, and have more men who hold Melchizedek priesthood.[3] [4] They argue that two reasons for this heightened faith are (1) the prevalence of extended kin networks in Utah where Mormon family members beyond the nuclear family support church participation and (2) the overall majority of Mormons creates a social

1 Smaller groups of followers supported other leaders and started splinter LDS groups that were mostly consolidated in 1860 into the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (today known as the Community of Christ). The Community of Christ continues to have a following of about 250,000 and is headquartered in Independence, Missouri (Eliason 1997, 195).

2 Goshute, Navajo, Paiute, Shoshone, and Ute peoples lived in Utah long before Mormons arrived. Mormons were the first European-descended people to permanently settle in the territory.

3 Social geographers tend to include most of Utah as well as predominately Mormon areas in southeastern Idaho; the Star Valley, Wyoming; and other Mormon communities like Mesa, Arizona in the Mormon Culture Region. General agreement exists that the core of the Mormon Culture Region is along the Wasatch Front in northern Utah (Phillips and Cragun 2013:79).

4 All Mormon males are eligible to participate in the LDS lay clergy as priests. Women cannot hold priesthood. There are two priesthood orders: the lower Aaronic Priesthood and the higher Melchizedek Priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood is open to "worthy" boys aged 12 to 18, and the Melchizedek Priesthood is open to "worthy" men aged 18 and over (Phillips and Cragun 2013, 92–93). Ecclesiastical leaders determine whether one is "worthy" through talks – like confessions – and judging one's involvement in church activities.

situation where "many secular institutions and social arrangements have a distinctly Mormon complexion" (Phillips and Cragun 2013:85).

Based on my own experience growing up in Utah, I believe Phillips and Cragun's assertions are fair. Mormons are deeply interested in their genealogy and know their relatives within a community, including second- and third-cousins. Most family members tend to be Mormon and they work together to ensure faithful commitment to the church. The Mormon influence on secular institutions and aspects of life is also very prevalent in Utah; I will focus on this in much greater detail later, but first I introduce the practice theory from which I endeavour to understand the social and cultural situation in Utah.

Theoretical Framework: Practice Theory

Practice theory is a theoretical framework that attempts to understand the relationship between the social structure's influence on individuals and individual agency's influence on the social structure. This relationship, in the Utahan context, is the focus of this essay. I see Mormon institutions – guided by ecclesiastical leadership – as the dominant social and cultural structure in Utah and am interested in how that structure influences individuals, especially those who are not Mormon or who are "Jack Mormons."[5] At the same time, I am also keenly interested in how individuals act to influence the dominant social structure in Utah.

In practice theory, practices are the social actions of social agents. Social agents can include both individuals and groups of individuals. Practices are diverse and range from linguistic expressions to artistic expressions to bodily movements to political displays and more. Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* suggests that practices are a "set of dispositions to act (e.g. speak, walk, read, or eat) in particular ways which are inculcated in each individual through implicit and explicit socialization" (Bucholtz 1999:205). In this sense, the social structure significantly influences the practices of individuals and even shapes their bodily dispositions – what Bourdieu refers to as *hexis*. Other practice theorists, like Michel de Certeau (1984), argue for more individual agency in social practices and seek to understand how practices "serve the specific social needs of individuals" (Bucholtz 1999:206). Sherry Ortner's (1996) feminist approach to practice theory has highlighted female agents as a central focus and found more of a middle ground between structure and agency that investigates how "domination itself [is] always riven with ambiguities, contradictions, and lacunae" and "social reproduction is never total, always imperfect, and vulnerable to pressures and instabilities inherent in any situation of unequal power" (Ortner 2006:7). My examination of Utahan culture finds that the relationship between the social and cultural structure and individual motivation is more complex than a simplistic understanding and that while individual's may influence society through their practices, especially when supported by other individuals or larger entities, acting against the grain of the social and cultural status quo can be quite challenging.

Joseph Rouse's (2007) review of practice theory shows that the theoretical uses of "practice" have been varied and diverse to the extent that some usages seem to contradict others, as suggested in the previous paragraph. Rouse's essay means to provide a logical coherence to practice theory by articulating "thematic rationales" that support practice theory's usefulness in the social sciences. In what follows, I remain focused primarily on three of Rouse's rationales to make practice theory useful in my analysis of Utahan society and culture. These include (1) an examination of practices, rules, and norms; (2) reconciling social structure with individual agency; and (3) focusing on bodily skills and disciplines.[6] Now, I will recount some of my own experiences growing up in Utah and how I was shaped by and reacted against the dominant, mainstream Mormon social structure.

5 "Jack Mormon" is a term used in Utah to describe a Mormon who refutes aspects of the LDS Church (often non-practicing members); it contrasts with "Molly Mormon," a term used to describe an ardent believer and practitioner.

6 Rouse (2007) also includes thematic rationales focusing on "language and tacit knowledge," "social science and social life," and "practices and the autonomy of the social" in his essay. I do not focus on these rationales in this essay due to limitations in my ability to provide them adequate content based on my method of recollecting my past experiences and analyzing a short documentary film.

The Shaping of a Child

I was born on a blizzardy day in December to a non-Mormon family who had recently moved to Logan, Utah from eastern Washington. My dad and mom were first-time parents who, in their early thirties, were older than most Mormon first-timers who commonly have kids in their early twenties. They were likely acutely aware of the differences between them and the majority of people in Logan. It took me a lot longer to notice.

Cultural and religious difference between oneself and others is not really something a kid thinks about at a young age. It was not something I really thought about either. I went to an elementary school, affectionately called "The Crayon School" because of crayon shaped pillars at the school's entrance. The school is located in an area of Logan that has a population with a lower socioeconomic standing than other parts of the city. Most of my classmates and friends were of European descent, but many were also from minority groups: Latino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Samoan, and Tongan. Differences between us were largely unheeded. My friends were kids like me who liked doing things like playing sports and testing teachers' patience. Now and then, though, I became aware that most people I knew were Mormon and I was not.

Playing basketball with a friend, we decided to cultivate our trash talking prowess but promised to self-bleep out actual swear words. I said the f-word vehemently in one of my rants and was met with a stunned face. My friend said that was the worst cuss word of all and God would be upset. God again had reason for disapproval when my parents went out of town, and I stayed with my friend's family. They took me to church on Sunday. My first time. I sat through the sermon in fear that if I got up to relieve myself, God would smite me. I peed my pants. Luckily, my friend's dad took me home before Sunday school so I did not have to sit embarrassed through it. Other realizations of difference were not so overtly religious in tone. In third grade, Bill Clinton was running against George Bush for the American presidency. To learn about voting, my class staged a mock vote. We built a voting booth with a ballot box and each took turns casting our vote. I remember being the only person who voted for Clinton; reflecting back, there were probably others with my political inclinations, but my experience seems to have made me selectively forget them. The majority of Bush supporters knew the way I had voted and ridiculed me for it. These moments punctuate a growing realization of not being quite the same as everyone else, a realization that would be full blown later in my life. For the most part though, my daily activities fit with the majority of my peers.

Reflecting on how my early childhood experiences might correlate with Groovin' Gary's own life is speculative. The film simply does not provide insight into Gary's background or upbringing. Still, assuming that he grew up in Beaver, there are similarities and differences that I can presume. Beaver, like Logan, is a dominantly Mormon community and would have had a similar education system as it is part of Utah. It is much smaller (pop. 1,453 in 1970) than Logan (pop. 33,022 in 1990) and would have had differences based on the time periods when we grew up (US Census Bureau 1970:15; US Census Bureau 1990:2).[7] Gary likely went to a small school. Beaver is primarily a farming community, and Gary may have been involved in farming activities from an early age. Hard work and helping out family and community have always been strong Mormon ideals. Mormon influence was probably strong throughout the entire community, instilling Mormon values and beliefs throughout daily life. It is unknown whether Gary is LDS or not, but, if so, he likely attended church almost every Sunday and learned Mormon doctrine at a young age. I suspect, like many children, he was not attuned to difference and felt pretty similar to other kids.

Early childhood is a time of socialization in which an individual's practices are shaped by families and larger structures like the education system. In Utah, children learn behaviours, values, and actions similar to other areas of the United States like kindness, sharing, cooperation, and fairness. Math, reading, writing, social studies, art, and other subjects are taught at schools. A sense of competitiveness may be instilled through participation in sports. Beyond

7 Gary grew up in the 1960s and 70s (the film takes place in 1979). I grew up in the 1980s, 90s, and early 2000s.

this, the Mormon religion has a great influence on all children. Mormon children practice values and beliefs everyday with their families and attend church and Sunday school. Boy Scouts, 4H, and other extracurricular activities are held at Mormon churches led by lay members. Even non-Mormons are influenced by Mormon values. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke (2004) show that non-Mormon religious denominations in Utah demonstrate more religious commitment and support than their congregations in other parts of the United States; this heightened activity surely influences youth participation in religious activity. As a non-Mormon in a non-religious family, God was not something discussed at my house, but I clearly believed in God to some degree and worried about how my own actions would be judged – not being Mormon was potentially a problem. My practices were tempered by Mormon beliefs and my peers (or their parents) would let me know when I was not behaving in appropriately Mormon ways.

Bourdieu (1977) theorizes three social dispositions that contribute to the construction of social and individual habitus: *doxa*, *orthodoxy,* and *heterodoxy.* In doxa, one's vision of reality is so well constructed that it appears to be natural, as if no other possible realities exist or could exist.

> The instruments of knowledge of the social world are in this case (objectively) political instruments which contribute to the reproduction of the social world by producing immediate adherence to the world, seen as self-evident and undisputed, of which they are the product and of which they reproduce the structures in a transformed form. [Bourdieu 1977:164]

Doxa is strong in childhood. While one is open to a wide range of knowledge about the world, most children do not really dispute what is taught. In Utah, the above statement could be reworded to "religious instruments" instead of "political instruments." The Mormon instruments actively work to reproduce the social world and indoctrinate children in that world. As the next section suggests, though, doxa often shifts into orthodoxy and heterodoxy as one gets older.

Adolescence

As I grew older and transitioned into middle school and then high school, a divide grew between me and most of my peers. It was not an apparent segregation in which I became physically separated from others. I still interacted with and hung out with my peers – Mormon and non-Mormon. It was more of a metaphysical divide. Mormon instruments began working much more actively to instill a sense of social norms and expectations in the adolescent population. Rouse (2007:507) points out, "if practices are temporally extended patterns of activity by multiple agents (perhaps encompassing more than one generation of practitioners), the question of how this pattern is sustained, transmitted, and imposed on subsequent performances has to be a primary theoretical concern."

In Logan, one mechanism that sustains the transmission of practices was quite evident in high school. Most everyone I knew had a "release period" during the day when they were released from school and went to a building on the corner of the school grounds, an LDS Seminary building. The seminary program was started in 1912 at Granite High School in Salt Lake City and is now part of most secondary schools in Utah as well as "public colleges and universities throughout the West" (Esplin and Randall 2014:22–23). In seminary, my peers learned Mormon scriptures and life lessons about how to behave such as the Word of Wisdom: the "law of health revealed by the Lord for the physical and spiritual benefit of His children" (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 2015), which encourages Mormons to abstain from certain substances (alcohol, tobacco, caffeine) and consume others (vegetables, fruits, meats). They also learned the Law of Chastity: "A guiding principle for all Mormon behaviour, the Law of Chastity influences everything from a Saint's clothing, language, and appearance to prohibitions on masturbation, pornography, and all sexual conduct outside of marriage – including homosexuality" (Peterfeso 2011:38–39).

Rouse (2007:514) says that practice theorists place emphasis on "bodily agency, intentionality, expressiveness, and affective response." These

aspects of practice emphasize individual agency. Teenagers are often experimenting in new and profound ways with their bodies and minds and express themselves in many mediums: clothing, music, art, speech, sports, and more. Then again, Rouse (2007:514), drawing on Foucalt, emphasizes that the body is often "the primary target of social normalization and the exercise of power." The Word of Wisdom and the Law of Chastity are just two doctrines emphasized by the Mormon Church to normalize members' embodied practices. They are emphasized and instilled weekly at church and daily in seminary. Lessons are driven home too and promulgated socially. For example, dating in high school occurred in group dates and 'steady relationships' were looked down upon; this helped safeguard the Law of Chastity. I abided to this as much as anyone, despite not having any overarching impetus to do so. Yet, there was plenty that I wanted to do and express and experiment with that went against social and cultural norms, and I really began to question the beliefs and (restricted) actions of Mormons.

A striking disjuncture that confirmed the distance I felt from my peers occurred in what I (somewhat) jokingly refer to as 'The Inquisition.' Seminary teachers told their students that they needed to stop listening to music with profanity. Going even further, they created a list of popular albums that were forbidden; students were cajoled to bring in these albums and destroy them. Some of my best friends – people whose taste in music I respected – were willingly purging their collections of albums like Nirvana's *Nevermind* (1991) and the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* (1991). It was nuts to me! How could people like something one day and the next day decide it was sinful just because they had been told by a Seminary teacher it was so? 'The Inquisition' is a particularly salient example of how people were conforming to social norms and practices: Mormons were meant to listen to unprofane music. I was entirely aware of the expectations of good behaviour and the connotations of not adhering to that behaviour. For the first time in my life, I consciously realized I did not want to adhere.

I was not alone in my consciousness of wanting to refute Mormon social norms. Mary Bucholtz (1999) offers the theoretical concepts of *positive identity practices* and *negative identity practices* in her application of practice theory to high school culture, specifically nerd girl culture. Positive identity practices are actions that associate one with a *community of practice* while negative identity practices are actions that disassociate someone from a community of practice. The community of practice is a framework emerging from practice theory that focuses on "a group of people orientated to the same [social] practice[s], though not necessarily in the same way" focusing on "difference and conflict, not uniformity and consensus, as the ordinary state of affairs" (Bucholtz 1999:210). By destroying 'profane' music and restricting their diet and language, many of my peers were positively identifying themselves with the mainstream Mormon community. I began to search for practices in which I could negatively identify with that community. Many of those practices positively identified me with other communities. Music was one outlet. While others destroyed their albums, I proudly listened to them and wore shirts from banned bands. I grew my hair long – something looked down upon by Mormons who prefer clean-cut appearance. Others did the same. Alternative styles became symbolic of resistance to Mormonism – many of my peers adopted punk or goth clothing and lifestyles. As soon as I turned eighteen, I went with a friend to get tattoos. We wanted symbols on our bodies that distinguished us as not Mormon. Just a tattoo was enough, nothing belligerently anti-Mormon, although resistance and outright rejection of Mormonism became increasingly important for some Jack Mormons – that same friend later tattooed a Darwin-fish on his forearm to express his apostasy and atheistic worldview. While distinct non-Mormon and fringe Mormon communities of practice existed (e.g. Punk, Goth, Straight Edge), boundaries

were fluid and identifying with others across community lines was common.[8]

Practices that positively identified one as non-Mormon or fringe Mormon were for the most part simply about establishing an identity. Dressing in alternative clothing and speaking with disdain towards Molly Mormons might be irreverent towards Mormon norms, but these actions did little to significantly affect the mainstream Mormon social and cultural system. Most practices were not really all that rebellious nor aimed at social change. Any changes that my actions may have influenced were unexpected and unintended. At most, I might have influenced friends who were questioning Mormon ideals to explore distancing themselves from the Church: many people I knew did reject Mormonism; others became more involved with their faith after questioning it. My actions simply helped me fit somewhere on the cultural fringe – a fringe that exists in relation with the dominant structure.

Outsider practices in Utah often draw on wider American culture, particularly film and music. I mimicked my rock idols; Groovin' Gary impersonated movie celebrities. Mormons in Utah take great pride in American ideals, especially since the early 20th century and World War I, and have selectively portrayed their history in line with key American motifs such as their pioneering trek to settle the intermountain West (Arrington and Bitton quoted in Esplin and Randall 2014:29; Eliason 1997). Appeals to alternative American culture might push the conservative buttons of Utahans a bit but are not repressed institutionally beyond encouraging the majority of insiders to resist such practices.

Bourdieu (1977:168–169) presents *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy* as two other social dispositions that can contribute to the construction of *habitus*. They occur in relationship to one another. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy exist when the unquestioned social reality of doxa is questioned. Orthodoxy is "straight, or rather *straightened*, opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa." Heterodoxy is the realization that choice exists between accepting the status quo and not accepting it: the choice of "*hairesis*, heresy." As one grows up in Utah, the unquestioned reasons for why one must abide mainstream Mormon social norms are questioned. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy became real possibilities. Seminary school and social pressure from the majority work to maintain orthodoxy; meanwhile, many non-Mormons and fringe Mormons are more in a heterodoxy state and practice heresies against the social norm. Most practices are not culture shaking events; they still exist within the realm of possibilities; however, sometimes practices push the limits of the Mormon social structure.

Groovin' Gary's Performance

At times, practices become *performances* and conscientiously challenge or reify the social and cultural system. By performance, I mean a social practice intended to be seen and reacted to by others. Groovin' Gary makes a challenging performance in *The Beaver Kid* that disrupts Mormon social norms much more than my antics described in the previous section.

After the opening interview, the film cuts from Groovin' Gary driving his car out of the news parking lot to a close-up of a handwritten letter. Harris, the director, reads the letter in a voice over. Gary apologizes for any inconvenience he may have caused Harris with his calls and writing, but he has put so much work into organizing a talent assembly. He would just love it if Harris could attend. We see shots of Harris making the 200 mile drive from Salt Lake City to Beaver. The voice over ends: "P.S. I will be putting on my makeup at the Open Mortuary at 8:00 am. You may want to get some shots." The Open Mortuary is shown in a short shot, and then we see Gary with a bib-like towel wrapped around his neck sitting in a chair inside of the mortuary.

A young woman named Sharron, presumably a mortician, is applying makeup to Gary. As she works,

8 Straight Edge refers to people who dress and act like punks but who reject drinking and doing drugs. Many fringe Mormons exhibit a resistance to stylistic norms in their clothing, body art, and music tastes while also accepting the Word of Wisdom through their dietary choices.

Gary justifies his identity. At first, it seems his words are mostly for the camera and Harris. "I'm still an ammo man. I'm doing outrageous things, but I… I enjoy being a guy. I really do." Sharron says he has to convince the audience. He answers, "I have to convince the audience that *I have not* gone crazy. It's just for fun." As the scene continues, the conversation becomes more intimate with Sharron, as if it is just the two of them talking. They discuss the upcoming performance. Gary says his ability to change his voice "was a gift from God," and Sharron affirms his impressions are excellent. Gary expresses some doubts, "I have a hard time expressing myself. Maybe I'm just nervous. I don't know." He keeps talking about how much he enjoys Beaver and "the really nice people." He and Sharron mention several people by name and discuss who will be at the performance. He enjoys making people laugh and wants to get a smile from them. Gary says a lot of people backed out: "they was probably disgusted with me." When the make-up is finished, Gary changes "into his threads" – a leather jacket, black denim jeans, knee-length leather boots, and a red and purple scarf. He tells the camera that he hopes the viewer does not think he is "really whacked out" and tells Sharron he is just a guy who loves Olivia Newton John. For a moment, Gary looks introspective and contemplative about what he is saying and doing. Harris asks if he is going to put his wig on, and Gary answers, "You bet." His confidence return as he dons the blonde wig.

In the mortuary, Gary exhibits trepidation about his cross-dressing. While strong opinion exists about gender identities and sexuality throughout the United States, the expected norms in Utah are extremely evident. Homosexuality is abhorred by most Mormons and is forbidden by the Law of Chastity. Similarly, gender switching and transgender behaviour is looked down on and even reviled. In my own upbringing, resisting these norms was never really something I had to deal with in a deeply personal way. I identify as a heterosexual male and fit mainstream expectations. I stood up for LGBTQ rights in a few arguments, but my own behaviours were never challenged. My peers in Utah whose sexuality and gender did not agree with the Mormon norm experienced challenges much greater than I ever did. Gary's own sexuality and gender identity are not fully disclosed in the film. Kine (2002) does not interpret Gary's actions as clearly transgender or homosexual behaviour. I, however, find his repeated justifications of maleness ("I'm a man, not a girl") might be for himself as much as the audience. Gary's decision to put together a talent show and perform in drag challenges social norms.

The talent show occurs in the auditorium of Beaver High School. A mustachioed emcee in a brown leather blazer introduces early acts. Two tall girls with perms and matching outfits sing "The Happiest Girl in the USA" while their mother accompanies them on piano. A freshman does a country version of "Let Me Be There." A dance team in blue and white sequined dresses do a routine. A girl wearing a bonnet does a comedy act talking as two people, shifting her lips from one side of her face to other as she switches characters. The performances are homely and innocent.

Then, before Gary's act, the camera turns to reveal the auditorium from the stage. It is mostly empty. The few people who are there applaud and whistle. Many of them are recognizable as earlier performers. The emcee announces the next performer: 'Olivia Newton Dawn.' Piano, drum, and guitar music begins to play. Gary comes on stage dressed in drag and sings "Please Don't Keep Me Waiting" (John 1978). She looks directly into the camera and widely opens her eyes. As she sings, she closes her eyes and gets into the beat. She frequently turns to the camera. The performance ends bizarrely and comically with someone in a creepy old man mask coming on stage and grabbing Olivia. She says "There you are you handsome man you!... Good lookin' tiger ain't he… Whoa help! Ahh! I'm not that heavy am I? Ahh?" The man picks her up and stumbles as they leave the stage.

The lack of people at the performance may reveal a resistance to Gary's performance by those who were not in attendance. Yet, Gary, in organizing a talent show at the local high school and dressing and performing as Olivia Newton Dawn, has created a venue for a performance that challenges expectations. His performance is very different than the other performances, which far more resemble the types of talent acts I saw growing up. Jill Peterfeso (2011),

in her analysis of the *Mormon Vagina Monologues*, draws upon the concept of the *utopian performance*. She says, "Utopian performativity has been described as "a manifestation of a 'doing' that is on the horizon. Even more than other performances, the utopian performative is infused with hope, with a future potentiality, with a process of and toward change yet unrealized" (Peterfeso 2011:48). Peterfeso (2011:49) argues that the *Mormon Vagina Monologues* performance in Salt Lake City in 2001 was a utopian performance in that women's "seximonies [i.e. testimonies] revealed, both directly and indirectly, patriarchy remains a system in which LDS women are enmeshed." Groovin' Gary's performance itself is not quite utopian; singing "Please Don't Keep Me Waiting" does not really express a process towards change unrealized. Nonetheless, Gary's very putting together of the show and creating a time and place for that performance to happen does have a utopian aspect to it. Gary likely tested norms in Beaver, and, even though not many people attended the performance, he achieved creating a moment for someone in drag to perform – he even got a film crew to film it.

Conclusion

Neither Gary's talent show nor my identity forming actions really represents outright activism against the Mormon social and cultural structure in Utah. It is actually difficult to rebel against a structure when that structure is pretty good. Living in Utah has its benefits. People are very nice as Gary says over and over throughout the film, and, even if you want to practice a bit more risqué life than that lived by strict Mormons, that risqué life is acceptable to a degree. Any change generated by outsider practices is slow and not entirely expected. Still, change influenced by non-Mormon practices, often supported by wider American trends, has occurred throughout Utah's history: for example, polygamy stopped being practiced by LDS in 1890, private Mormon academies were shut down and public schools (with Seminaries) are highly supported, and drinking laws have become less and less stringent.[9] At times, individual and groups whose lifestyles are repressed by Mormonism find moments to make utopian performances. Gary, to a degree, did so. Challenging utopian performances have had their successes: for example, same-sex marriage became permanently legal in Utah in 2014 (Romboy 2014). Critiquing social and cultural norms through performance can be an incredible act of individual agency, but it can also be extremely challenging and the pressure can have negative consequences.

Beaver Trilogy includes two other films that are dramatic recreations of the documentary, starring Sean Penn and Crispin Glover in Groovin' Gary's role. One quite drastic difference from the original is that both end with a critical phone call. The Gary character calls the director, who plays a central role in both films, and pleads with him to not broadcast the film; the director answers roughly, saying he put a lot of hard work into the film and has to show it. After the conversation, the Gary character hangs up the phone and holds a gun to his head, considering suicide. In the Sean Penn film, the phone rings and a girl on the other end of the line tells him how great the performance was. In the Crispin Glover film, he decides against suicide, dresses up as Olivia Newton Dawn, and rides out of town on a motorcycle.

Why were these endings added to the film? Kine (2002) interviewed Harris in *This American Life*. He reveals that after filming the documentary, he did get a phone call from Gary. Gary did not want the film on television any more. Harris feels he was not as sensitive as he could have been to Gary. He found out later that Gary had been involved in an accident with a gun. Gary survived and recovered, even calling Harris after the accident to apologize for his actions. Harris never did air his footage until 2001 at the Sundance Film Festival, twenty-two years after the film was made. Gary actually attended the screening, still worried that people would think he was a nut, but the audience loved him. He signed autographs and became a film star for one night.

This story about the *The Beaver Kid* shows just how powerful social and cultural norms can be. Groovin' Gary's individually motivated performance challenged the social structure, but the social structure challenged Gary throughout the whole process. If Gary's gun accident was related to the making

9 Some non-mainstream Mormon sects like the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints still practice polygamy.

of the film and his performance, it shows just how challenging the social structure can be to individuals trying to test limits. As someone who identifies with the fringe of Utahan culture, I can attest to how hard it can be internally to achieve the positive identity practices that keep you on that fringe. Those practices, combined with many other people making similar practices, might transform and shift the social and cultural structure slowly over time, but the social structure can quickly influence individuals in what they choose and choose not to practice.

References

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bucholtz, Mary
1999 "Why Be Normal?": Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls." Language in Society 28:203–223.

Certeau, Michel de
1984 The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
2015 Word of Wisdom. Accessed March 29, 2015. https://www.lds.org/topics/word-of-wisdom?lang=eng.

Eliason, Eric A.
1997 Pioneers and Recapitulation in Mormon Popular Historical Expression. In Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America. Tad Tuleja, ed. Pp 175–211. Logan: Utah State University Press.

Esplin, Scott C., and E. Vance Randall
2014 Living in Two Worlds: The Development and Transition of Mormon Education in American Society. History of Education 43(1):3–30.

Hage, Ghassan
2006 Insiders and Outsiders. In Sociology: Place, Time and Division. Peter Beilharz and Trevor Hogan, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harris, Trent, dir.
2001 Beaver Trilogy. 84 min. United States.

John, Olivia Newton
1978 Please Don't Keep Me Waiting. From Totally Hot. United States: MCA.

Kine, Starlee
2002 Reruns: Action! Action! Action! This American Life. United States: PRX The Public Radio Exchange, December 6.

Nirvana
1991 Nevermind. United States: DGC Records.

Ortner, Sherry B.
1996 Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Gender. Boston: Beacon Press.
2006 Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject. Durham: Duke University Press.

Peterfeso, Jill
2011 From Testimony to Seximony, From Script to Scripture: Revealing Mormon Women's Sexuality through the Mormon Vagina Monologues. Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 27(2):31–49.

Phillips, Rick, and Ryan Cragun
2013 Contemporary Mormon Religiosity and the Legacy of "Gathering." Nova Religio 16(3):77–94.

Red Hot Chili Peppers
1991 Blood Sugar Sex Magik. United States: Warner Bros.

Romboy, Dennis
2014 Same-Sex Marriage Now Legal in Utah. Desert News, October 6.

Rouse, Joseph
2007 Practice Theory. Division I Faculty Publications. WesScholar. Accessed March 15, 2015. http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/div1facpubs/43.

Simmel, Georg.
1950 The Stranger. In The Sociology of Georg Simmel. Kurt Wolff, ed. Pp 402–408. New York: Free Press.

Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke
2004 Religions in Context: The Response of Non-Mormon Faiths in Utah. Review of Religious Research 45(3):293–298.

US Census Bureau
1970 1970 Census of Population: Utah. Washington D.C.
1990 1990 Census of Population: Utah. Washington D.C.

Vogt, Evon Z.
1955 American Subcultural Continua as Exemplified by the Mormons and Texans. American Anthropologist 57:1163–1172.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 77-97

To 'Give Voice'? To 'Speak For'? Representing Testimony and Protest at UK Immigration Detention Centres

Ewen MacArthur
The University of British Columbia

Abstract: Efforts at emancipatory politics and media production can be characterised by a critical attitude to the very notion of representation, for example in political and artistic terms. Agency is often linked to 'voice,' and emancipation to one's ability to 'speak for' oneself. But if we insist that people 'speak for' themselves, what does this mean for allyship? Activist filmmakers, journalists, scholars and media-producers often justify what they do as 'giving voice.' Yet, this seemingly simple goal, 'to give voice,' is rarely elaborated, and the mediating role of the 'giver' of voice is often obscured. In this essay, I explore abstract conceptions of 'giving voice' and 'speaking for' others by reflecting on my own experience making short testimonial videos about protests in UK immigration detention centres with *Standoff Films*. The significance of people's 'speech,' I maintain, should be assessed with reference to intention, as well as form. 'Voice' is powerful not in isolation, but when activated in a living social context. I suggest the primary truth-value of representations resides in the quality of their constitutive social relationships, characterised by honest attempts to listen, interpret and faithfully communicate, rather than in the technical accuracy of mimesis. Silencing, of some extent, is a necessary part of this process. As media-makers, I believe we should reflect on the silences in our representations when possible, and acknowledge when silences are primarily the result of issues in the world, rather than our own failures to 'give voice.' Rather than forsake representation and proclaim "everyone should speak for themselves!," self-reflection may cause us to strategically (re) orientate our representations, in dialogue with those we represent in a spirit of solidarity.

Key Words: media, immigration detention, voice, auto-ethnography, emancipatory politics, activism, allyship, representation

Saturday, 29 November 2014

"England," a voice bellows.

"Hear our voice!" a crowd roars in response.

"We want," another voice bellows.

"Freedom!" the crowd roars.

The shouts are loud. They resound with power and desperation. I can hear them standing at the south side of Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), separated by two sets of barbed-wire, steel-sheeted fences. I turn. With my back to the centre, I face empty farmland, black in the night and otherwise silent (fig.1). No-one outside the centre can hear the shouts except us.

Tom points the voice recorder towards the fences. I climb a tree and hold my tripod fully outstretched above my head, camera on top, and point the lens towards the enclosed detention centre yard where the detainees are protesting (fig.5). After Tom and I record what we need, we pace the detention centre's perimeter, stopping periodically so I can film a few exterior shots (e.g. fig.2-4). The guards don't seem to notice us; they probably have enough to deal with.

We speed-walk away and find a quiet spot a safe distance from the centre gates and return calls from a number of detainees. "We are making a short video about what is happening in Campsfield tonight," I explain. "Do you have anything you want to say?"

"I simply want to say that Campsfield, that the Campsfield staff have beaten my friend very badly," one detainee asserts. "So they are treating us like an animal. Not enough food. Not medication. We are not animal, we are human."

Fig.1 Campsfield House IRC Imagery ©2016 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, DigitalGlobe, Map data © Google

"Like five of the detainees saw it, like eye witness. They put him on the floor and they beat him up really badly," another protester explains. "It's all racist here, all the system."

"They have locked us down during that time," a third person describes. "We have called police. Police came. They are telling police everything is ok. But if everything is ok, where is our guy who has been beaten up?"

Sunday, 30 November 2014

Vera and I edit a video the next day. We listen to the recorded testimonies. We cut down each detainee's statement to what we understand to be its core message without them. I told everyone I would edit their statements on the phone: as they are detained, they can't safely watch the video, let alone help with the editing.

"It is good to include the call for people to speak for them," I say.

"I think it's important he is blaming the system," Vera suggests.

"That's a strong statement," we agree, as we cut up and rearrange the detainee's words to condense multiple testimonies into a single soundbite-friendly video for distribution on the internet.

Monday, 1 December 2014

The video is sent out with a press release.[1] It does better than I expect.[2] Four thousand people watch it in two days. It is tweeted widely. BBC Oxford broadcasts snippets on the regional news. The protest is referenced in four questions in Parliament. A police complaint procedure is initiated by local campaigners. Yet, nobody, as far as I know, is made accountable. Detainees involved in the protest are split up and dispersed across other detention centres in the UK. The person who alerted us to the protest is put in solitary confinement for four days without access to his phone or belongings. He is moved to Colnbrook IRC in London, before he is forcibly removed from the UK.[3]

I wonder to myself: Who do these videos serve? What is the purpose? I play the video back to myself: "Nobody cares about our lives. Nobody is speaking for us. No-one even knows we exist… All they are trying to do right now is not let the news go out of this centre…I would like to say if there is anyone with any feelings, please speak for us. We are humans as well. We are same like you."

1 You can watch the video 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC here: https://vimeo.com/113244678

2 See for example: England 2014; The Multicultural Politic 2014.

3 See the video "Four days they keep me in the cell" - Witness Reports on the Aftermath of Campsfield Assault on 29th Nov: https://vimeo.com/116481472.

Introduction

On 29th November 2014, detainees at Campsfield House IRC call "England" to "Hear our voice" and for "anyone with any feelings" to "please speak for us." This call is issued in stark awareness of immigration detention's silencing effects, by detainees who struggle against the experience of being silenced. Nearly 100 different people, from all around the world, 'spoke' in a collective 'voice' in Campsfield on the 29th November 2014; in the *Standoff Films'* video, just three speak in the name of them all. They expose the brutality of the immigration detention system, and they proclaim a collective humanity in defiance of this system's dehumanising effects.

In recent years I have responded to such calls from UK immigration detention centres by making short videos with *Standoff Films*. The central aim is to relay messages spoken by people incarcerated within immigration detention centres to wider circuits of citizens. At first impression, these short *Standoff Films* videos might be understood as efforts to 'give voice' to detained people. On closer inspection, as I will show, they can also be understood as efforts to 'speak for' different people in detention. What is the significance of this distinction? A noteworthy tendency in contemporary efforts at emancipatory politics and media production can be characterised by a critical attitude to the very notion of representation, in political terms (e.g. in certain calls for "real democracy" issued by members of movements such as Occupy) and in artistic terms (e.g. the performative rather than indexical emphasis of some video art, such as *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989) or *Reassemblage* (1982) by Trinh Minh-Ha). Often influenced by feminist, critical race, post-structuralist or post-modern theories – frequently sharpened by lived experiences of oppression or betrayal by so-called 'representatives' – many thinkers and activists have rightly stressed the propensity for repression when some people 'speak for' others (Foucault and Deleuze 1977). Agency has been linked to 'voice,' and emancipation to one's ability to 'speak for' oneself (Lorde 1984). We should not discount the emancipatory potential of 'voice' or ignore the repressive capacity of 'speaking for' others. But if we insist that people 'speak for' themselves, what does this mean for allyship? When we hear calls for representation, such as that issued in Campsfield on the 29th November 2014, how can allies respond in solidarity? Often activist filmmakers, journalists, scholars and media producers justify what they do as 'giving voice.' Yet, this seemingly simple goal, 'to give voice,' is rarely elaborated. What does it mean 'to give voice'? Under certain conditions, is it appropriate – necessary even – to 'speak for' another?

Fig.2 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC (03:10) https://vimeo.com/113244678

Fig.3 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC (1:03) https://vimeo.com/113244678

Fig.4 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC (1:12) https://vimeo.com/113244678

Fig.8 *Over 50 detainees go on Hunger Strike at Campsfield House IRC 07.05.14* (3:18) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABm8hZXn5IA

In this essay I explore the inner dynamics of 'giving voice' by reflecting on the short videos I have made with *Standoff Films*. Documentary video production is an obviously social and technical process, which might highlight interpersonal dynamics that are also present in other media practices, where they are often more covert. Interpretation occurs at multiple stages of the video-making process. This process is shaped by video-makers, video-subjects and video-audiences, albeit in different ways. The patronising proposition, to 'give voice,' misrepresents this process: the giver of 'voice' is not as transparent as the phrase implies, nor is the subject of 'voice' as passive. The *Standoff Films* videos are obviously not seamless representations, as I discuss. Their principal value should be assessed, I suggest, not by the more or less accurate re-presentation of 'voice,' but in the way they activate 'voice' in a living social context. I believe this observation bears elaboration at a time when, in the human sciences and in emancipatory politics, an attentiveness to 'voice' is often proclaimed as the answer to a "crisis of representation" and the harbinger of a more self-reflective identity politics (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Lorde 1984; Hill Collins 1999; Couldry 2010).[4] [5]

Subjectivity and Objectivity

> If testis designates the witness insofar as he intervenes as a third in a suit between two subjects, and if supertestes indicates the one who has fully lived through an experience and can therefore relate it to others, auctor signifies the witness insofar as his testimony always presupposes something that pre-exists him and whose reality and force must be validated or certified. Testimony is thus always an act of "author." [Agamben 2000:149]

Standoff Films is an independent documentary production company, whose documentaries seek to "uncover unsettling realities by hearing from those most directly affected by the social and political situations we examine" (www.standoffilms.com). *Standoff Films* has made a number of longer and shorter documentaries, some of which feature academics, politicians, lawyers, and activists, in addition to people in and who have been in immigration detention, all of whom discuss and analyse the UK immigration detention system. Occasionally *Standoff Films* videos include photography or video recorded inside detention centres.[6] This is rare as image recording devices are prohibited within immigration detention, and I will not discuss these videos here. In this essay, I will focus on the short *Standoff Films* videos which solely feature the voices of currently detained people. These videos are made in response to calls issued from within immigration detention centres, channelled to the video-makers through a network of personal and extended contacts, inside and outside these centres. The video-makers record statements from people in detention over the phone. Audio-recordings are edited and set to moving-images of detention centre exteriors recorded by the video-makers (e.g. fig. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). There is no explanatory voice over.

These videos might appear as one of the most straightforward instances of 'giving voice.' The audience learns about the experience of immigration detention from people in detention – the *supertestes,* to use Agamben's term. This is a principle aim. But, of course, the impression of hearing directly from detainees is composed by the video-makers. Voices are recorded, interpreted, edited, condensed, rearranged and replayed through the video-making process. It could be said that the redeployment of 'voices' in these short videos in fact constitutes *Standoff Films'* own cinematic 'voice.' In the words of the documentary film theorist Bill Nichols, it is the "specific orientation to the historical world that gives documentary a voice of its own" (Nichols 2001: 98). The videos

4 Some of the most pioneering and incisive calls for a greater attentiveness to 'voice' has come from feminists, and particularly feminist women of colour, whose critiques need to be heard in the academy and beyond. See for example: Minh-Ha 1989; Hull et al. 1982; Hill Collins, Patricia 1999; Wolf 1992; M. Z. Rosaldo 1980.

5 To name just a few key examples of anthropologists who emphasise the importance of 'voice' and 'giving voice' in different ways: Renato Rosaldo 1980, 1989; Goldstein 2012; Gubrium et al. 2014; Behar 1996; Thompson 1978; Portelli 2006.

6 For example: "He did not die. So the officers started beating him up": 6 March 2015, IRC the Verne https://vimeo.com/122270700 ; Detainees expose bed bugs & mice at Harmondsworth https://vimeo.com/106044102 ; Harmondsworth hunger striker speaks out 15.3.15 https://vimeo.com/123100987.

could even be understood to 'speak for' people in detention, insofar as the video-makers modify what people in detention actually tell them in an effort to distribute audio-statements to wider audiences. Rather than reproducing the 'voice' of people in immigration detention, the videos might be considered to instead reproduce the video-makers' secondary experiences as witnesses to the experiences of people in detention – as *testis* perhaps. In the videos we hear voices on the other end of a phone-line, and we see immigration detention centres from the outside. The imposing walls and barbed wire fences might suggest what we cannot see as an external witness, more than they tell us anything specific about what it is happening inside the centres.

By distributing short videos, *Standoff Films* seeks to expand an audience of witnesses to events in immigration detention – witnesses who are "situated as potential ethical actors who might intervene in the situation that produced the suffering that is on display" (McLagan 2003). 'Voice' is critical to this intention. In the *Standoff Films* videos testimony from people in detention is not explained, questioned or confirmed. It is simply contextualised with moving-images of detention centre exteriors (e.g. fig. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) and brief textual introductions (e.g. fig. 9). This allows video-audiences to be affected by a more immediate encounter with 'voices' from detention, and to be "with those who suffer in the moment" (Hatley 2000: 2). As James Hatley describes:

> By witness is meant a mode of responding to the other's plight that exceeds an epistemological determination and becomes an ethical involvement. One must not only utter a truth about the victim but also remain true to her or him. In this latter mode of response, one is summoned to attentiveness, which is to say, to a heartfelt concern for and acknowledgement of the gravity of violence directed toward particular others. In this attentiveness, the wounding of the other is registered in the first place not as an objective fact but as a subjective blow, a persecution, a trauma. The witness refuses to forget the weight of this blow, or the depth of the wound it inflicts. [Hatley 2000:2–3]

Fig.5 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC (05.06) https://vimeo.com/113244678

Fig.6 Harmondsworth Hunger Strike 9 March 2015 (01:38). https://vimeo.com/121766147

Asylum seekers, foreign national offenders, visa over-stayers, and other people in immigration detention are systematically silenced and routinely disbelieved. Incarcerated and without valid work visas, they lack the means and resources to be heard among wider circuits of citizens for the most part. They are cross-examined and interrogated in interviews with Home Office officials and before immigration and asylum tribunals.[7][8][9] In widespread media representations, asylum seekers are portrayed as "untrustworthy" and "bogus," and migrants as "illegal" and "scroungers."[10] The most common category of person in immigration detention are people who have claimed asylum at some point.[11] Rather than interrogate the truth-claims

7 See Yeo 2014.

8 You can read the official rules of the First Tier Tribunal for Immigration and Asylum here: HM Courts & Tribunals Service, *First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum)* https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-immigration-and-asylum (accessed August 27 2016).

9 See also Souter 2011.

10 See the *Migration in the News* report from the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford (2013). On criminalisation, see Haglund 2012.

11 See the *Immigration Detention in the UK* briefing from Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford (2016).

of people in detention over the phone, the *Standoff Films* video makers are with them in the moment. If these people in detention want an incident known, we contact other media outlets to encourage them to run the story as we can, and we produce and distribute short videos through our own networks. I believe we stay "true to" people in detention in the edited *Standoff Films* videos (Hatley 2000). The public conversation about immigration in the UK is toxic, while dramatic events in detention, including assaults by guards, protests, hunger strikes, revolts and deaths, often go unreported in mainstream news coverage. We believe it is important citizens know what is happening at immigration detention centres across the UK, often only a short bus journey away. Video-audiences are given the opportunity to hear and, crucially, to believe people in immigration detention in their own voice. I am convinced that this is inherently worthwhile.

"What is a politics of "testimony that substitutes its own truth for the truth of those in whose name it is deployed?" The anthropologist Didier Fassin asks this question in a discussion of "humanitarian witness," who, Fassin contends, maintains political neutrality (frequently a pre-condition of their work in sites of conflict, where aid is desperately needed) by refusing to comment on a broader historical situation (Fassin 2012: 204-207). To further a compassionate cause, humanitarian witnesses reduce the "subject" to the "victim," Fassin suggests, and focus on the simple fact of suffering rather than its external causes. In the process, they establish themselves as "spokespeople for the voiceless" (Fassin 2012: 204-207). Fassin's critique of humanitarianism extends beyond aid-workers and humanitarian non-governmental organisations to a wide range of activists, media-professionals, and academics, who also substitute the truth of their representations for the truth of those in whose name they speak, or 'give voice,' in a spirit of charitable compassion.[12]

In the case of *Standoff Films,* at least, we would have to actively edit audio-statements to turn people into mere victims. People in detention usually speak to the video-makers for the explicit purpose of raising awareness of a political situation. In the case of *Standoff Films,* to focus solely on people's suffering in detention, and to ignore external causes, would constitute a betrayal.

The *Standoff Films* video-makers do not substitute the truth of their representations for the truth of particular people in detention in actuality. Rather, the video-making process allows us to quote people in detention in their own words through edited audio-recordings. Our videos do not make explicit judgements concerning the validity of specific testimonies. We simply choose to repeat certain statements issued by people in detentions without additional qualification, to let the reality of UK immigration detention reveal itself to video-audiences. How else can one understand immigration detention except through the testimonies of detainees? Even if we could see inside the detention centres, images of women and men locked in cells cannot 'voice' the reality of indefinite incarceration.

The *Standoff Films* videos actively engage audiences in a process of interpretation. We ask video-audiences to listen to people in detention without insisting on a specific conclusion. To this extent, the video's restrained tone relates to the video-makers position as a secondary witness. It allows *Standoff Films* to simply submit testimony, rather than propagandise or proselytise, which can be easily dismissed as conspiracy. The "humanitarian witness" as *testis* might mobilise the rhetoric of *super-testes* on the behalf of the "voiceless" – a "subjectivity without subjects," to use Fassin's phrase. *Standoff Films,* by contrast, mobilises an "objectivity without objects" (my phrase), so that detainees' can access a rhetoric of *testis,* to empower the truth-claims of their own speech among a citizen-public who often do not hear them. There may be no objective *testis* in reality; but rather than renege the citizen bystanders' authority, the *Standoff Films* video-makers repeat what they have heard and seen as evidence, so that audiences may witness events in immigration detention centres for themselves, and come to their own interpretations.

12 Without discounting the affective power and phenomenological insights of ethnographic approaches sensitive to 'voice,' it is important to note the parallel between a humanitarian calls to compassion and calls for empathetic engagement by certain anthropologists, filmmakers and artists. Consider for example Carolyn S. Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner's advocacy of "story truth" over "happening-truth" and their advocacy of "a communion borne of what Arthur Frank calls "the pedagogy of suffering"" (Ellis and Bochner 2006).

"Experience" may not provide "evidence" in itself, as Joan Scott tells us. It first needs to be interpreted (Scott 1991). Experiences can challenge preconceptions, however, and unsettle hegemonic narratives through counter-examples. People in immigration detention are often assumed as 'criminal' – why else would they be locked up? Official UK state violence is commonly considered legitimate, and based in due process. In UK immigration detention centres, people are detained without a time limit. They are incarcerated without trial by an administrative decision. People in detention have not necessarily committed any crime, nor are they suspected of having done so. Countless abuses occur within immigration detention. In just three years, from 2011 to 2014, UK high courts ruled six times that Article Three of the European Convention on Human Rights forbidding "torture or…inhuman or degrading treatment" had been violated in UK immigration detention centres.[13][14] Consider that most people in immigration detention are never able to launch legal claims which makes these rulings possible.

In the *Standoff Films* videos, detained people speak. Video-audiences are given the opportunity to witness events in immigration detention, and choose to enter an "ethical involvement" across distinctions of citizenship and migration status (Hatley 2000: 2). But people in immigration detention do not simply 'voice' their experiences. They suggest explanations: many blame "racism"; some suggest that "incompetence" and bureaucratic process is at fault; others point to security companies' drive for profit as a reason for the increased use of privatised immigration detention centres. By listening to these usually silenced voices, some *Standoff Films* video-audiences may reflect on the nature of state and society in new ways. Some might take a more informed political position of their own as a result.

Friday, 2 May 2014

Over 150 detainees go on hunger strike and stage a sit down protest at Harmondsworth IRC in London. "We are going to demonstrate at the centre gates tomorrow to express solidarity with the protesting detainees," Phil tells me. "Can you bring your camera?"

As I stand with a number of family members and supporters at the back of Harmondsworth IRC, I can faintly make out a hand waving through one of the windows (fig.6). A hunger striker tells us later on the phone, "everyone wants to see you in the windows. And then they are very happy… because you come down to support us, so I want to see you as well."

After the demonstration, Phil and I call a number of people in Harmondsworth. More people want to record statements than we are able to handle. They all have different stories: they find hope in different places. Nonetheless, one man tells us "95% people are on hunger strike." Is this really true? I do not doubt it on the phone or in the video, but just present his speech as it exists in actuality, to stay true to him and channel his demand: "The person needs to tell us how many days maximum they are going to keep us in detention."

Voice and Speech

> Among living beings, only man has language. The voice is the sign of pain and pleasure, and this is why it belongs to other living beings (since their nature has developed to the point of having the sensations of pain and pleasure and of signifying the two). But language is for manifesting the fitting and the unfitting and the just and the unjust. To have the sensation of the good and the bad and of the just and the unjust is what is proper to men as opposed to other living beings, and the community of these things makes dwelling and the city.
> Aristotle, *The Politics* (1986: 10-18)

In the introduction to *Homo Sacer* (1998), the philosopher Georgio Agamben elucidates the relationship between the 'natural life' (*bio*) of the home and the 'political life' (*zoe*) of the city (*polis*) with reference to the distinction Aristotle draws between 'voice' (*phone*) and 'speech' (*logos*) in *The Politics*. Agamben asserts: "The question "In what way does the living being have language?" corresponds exactly to the question "In what way does *bare life* dwell in the *polis*?" The living

13 European Court of Human Rights, The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms http://www.echr.coe.int/pages/home.aspx?p=basictexts (accessed August 27 2016).

14 For example: f R (S) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2014] EWHC 50 (Admin). See Pennington 2014; Phelps 2014.

being has *logos* by taking away and conserving its own voice in it, even as it dwells in the *polis* by letting its own *bare life* be excluded, as an exception, within it" (Agamben 1998:10).

For Agamben, then, the relationship of 'voice' to 'speech' is analogous to the relation of 'life' to 'politics.' It is one predicated on a substitution, whereby what is substituted is implicated in its absence. 'Voice' is in 'speech,' as 'bare life' is in the *'polis,'* through an inclusive exclusion, as an "exception." This helps Agamben consider the nature of sovereignty with reference to Carl Schmitt's infamous maxim: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception." Indeed, the analogy between 'voice' (*phone*) and 'speech' (*logos*), 'natural life' (*bio*) and 'political life' (*zoe*), as well as the subsequent substitution is understood by Agamben as the metaphysical underpinning of Western politics itself: "There is politics because man is the living being who, in language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion" (Agamben 1998: 8).[15] As that against which "politics" and "speech" finds their ontological basis, through an "inclusive exclusion," in a "state of exception," "bare life" and "voice" are by definition without "politics" and without "speech."

The "state of exception," Agamben provocatively suggests, finds it's "materialization" in the "camp." Agamben regards the "camp" "not as a historical fact and an anomaly belonging to the past … but in some way as the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living." On this basis, he assimilates all sorts of spaces of internment where "the normal order is de facto suspended" under the rubric of "camp," including detention centres for undocumented migrants, tracing their genealogy if not their history back to an ontological distinction between "life" and "politics," "voice" and "speech" articulated in ancient Athens. In the "camp" political rights, including human rights, do not in themselves bind as eternal principles, for, as a materialisation of the "state of exception," the sovereign reigns supreme: "whether or not atrocities are committed depends not on law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign" (Agamben 1998: 18-19; see also Agamben: 2005).

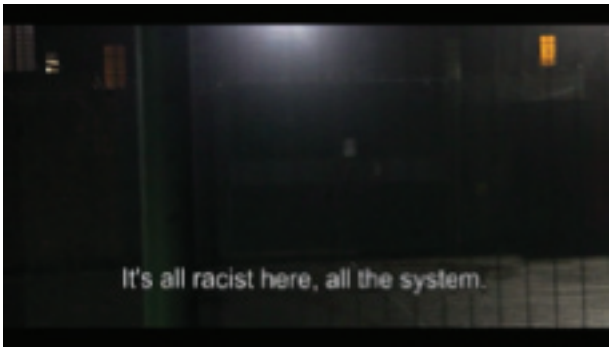

Fig.7, 8. 29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC (02:16) https://vimeo.com/113244678

The philosophy of Giorgio Agamben has obvious resonance for activists and academics hoping to theoretically critique the limitations of human rights and conceptualise the breakdown of due legal process for undocumented migrants (e.g. Bernardot 2008; Rahola 2007; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004; Schinkel W 2009). Without commenting on Agamben's metaphysical import directly, empirical realities are far more ambiguous and complex than the abstract paradigm "state of exception" can articulate. The law does not simply cease to exist in immigration detention. Rather, as is true of many of Agamben's so-called "camps," the law holds, with many exceptions.[16] The structural vulnerability of detainees does create an environment in which guards often abuse power with impunity, but it is not the case that they act as sovereign limited only by their own moral sensibilities; a political and legal frame-

15 For an informative discussion of the relationship of 'voice' to 'bare life' also see Oswel 2009. I am indebted to David Oswell's discussion.

16 For further critical discussion of Agamben's notion of the "state of exception" with reference to different empirical examples see Fassin 2012. I am indebted to Didier Fassin's remarks.

Fig.9-12 Hunger Strike at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre forces Home Office to negotiate, May, 2014 (clockwise from top left: 0:17, 1:22, 04:19, 2:03) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow8MaauT13c

work operates nevertheless. Immigration detention is shaped by juridical and political processes – processes which detainees struggle to influence. Agamben may appear as one of the staunchest critics of liberal discourses of humanitarianism, but his political theology seems to provide no practical political possibility except for humanitarian intervention. For, if detainees are reduced to "bare life," interned within a "state of exception," until the ontological basis of western politics is overthrown, what can we do but 'speak for' them?

As a major means of resistance in immigration detention, hunger strikes might suggest that people in detention primarily engage politics by means of their own "bare life." If you actually listen to what detainees say, however, it is clear that hunger strikes are actually an explicitly political process of claim-making and collective organisation – processes which a state of "bare life" would render impossible.[17] As one person on hunger strike told me, repeating a sentiment I have heard from protesting detainees countless times: "They are treating us like we are animals or less than animals; we are human."[18] The brutal system of immigration detention can crush hope, as suggested by the horrifically high suicide rates in immigration detention centres, reaching an average of more than one a day in 2016 according to official figures.[19] But the political force of hunger strikes do not principally rest in the ending of detainees' lives. Rather, detainees' mobilise hunger strikes as a means of purposeful political speech, as they struggle against the UK immigration detention system. Some hunger strikes are carried out to the 'extreme' with serious consequences for those involved.[20] Many hunger strikes are not 'actually' hunger strikes as generally

17 For a discussion of political activity in so called "states of exception" which Agamben's philosophy would render impossible, see: Negri 2007 and Ziarek 2008.

18 For a discussion of Agamben's philosophy with reference to hunger strikes in Australian immigration detention centres, see Bailey 2009. I am indebted to Richard Bailey's consideration.

19 There were 393 recorded suicide attempts in UK immigration detention centres in 2015. See results of a freedom of information request by No Deportations (2015). Also see Diane Taylor (2016).

20 For example, see Allison 2013; Hughes 2012.

conceived – some people eat and drink, but not the food they are given. They register as not eating on centre records to mobilise the hunger strike as a collective symbolic statement. During the March 2015 hunger strikes, a close collaborator told me about a conversation they had with the director of a big humanitarian organisation, who dismissively defended the organisations' decision not to publicise this hunger strike because "they aren't really hunger striking, are they!" Could he want them to be reduced to "bare life" for real, in order for him to 'give' them 'voice' as he 'speaks for' them?

"They are treating us like we are animals or less than animals; we are human." In statements like these, the importance of the distinction between 'voice' and 'speech' becomes clear. If 'voice' is expressive of experience, no-one can simply 'give voice' to the *supertestes*, to use Agamben's terms; neither should its expression be celebrated without self-reflection, especially when it is the 'voice' of the 'oppressed.' As the anthropologist Gerald Sider reminds us, agency does not reside simply in the expression of experience, but in the struggle "against experience" (Sider 1997). Perhaps those of us who want to employ media as part of an emancipatory agenda should not unreflectively 'give voice' – a patronising and debilitating notion – but consider the purposeful 'speech' of people we seek to work in solidarity with. This might enable us to remain "true to" the people whose testimony we represent, in the way in which 'voice' is not only expressed, but deployed (Hatley 2000).

People in detention actively shape the *Standoff Films* video representations through their 'speech.' They do not simply express their own individual 'voices,' but 'speak for' themselves and others, often as part of a collective 'voice.' Like the *Standoff Films* videos, pronouncements by people in detention are not the product of a linear and transparent process of mere expression. According to Oxford based criminologist, Mary Bosworth, who spoke with detainees at Campsfield House a few days after the 29th November protest, many detainees had not taken part in the protest and some had even labelled those who had as 'troublemakers' (Bosworth, 2014 private conversation with Isotta Rosilini). It is clearly vital to reflect on the silences in one's representations; but what should media-makers do about these necessary silences? We cannot (nor should we attempt to) 'give voice' to all 'voices' in the end. We might consider instead: who we 'speak' with, to what effects, with which 'voices,' to what affects.

Monday, 9 March 2015

Three hundred detainees launch a mass hunger strike at Harmondsworth IRCand spark an uprising across the UK immigration detention estate. Detainees at Colnbrook IRC, Dungavel IRC, BrookHouse IRC, and Tinsley House IRC join the hunger strike. A riot breaks out at the Verne IRC.[21] Women at Yarl's Wood IRC take mass collective action and write "We are not animals" across their t-shirts.[22]

Standoff Films makes five videos during this time. As only one part of a broader network, we help link people in detention to other media outlets.[23] Through the hard work of many, in and out of detention, there is some success. *Channel Four* fly a helicopter over Harmondsworth to reveal the ongoing occupation of the detention centre yard (fig.14).[24] The *Independent* newspaper publishes two articles on the hunger strike.[25] A number of independent media outlets run further stories.[26] The most extensive coverage comes from *Russia Today*, the English language media-outlet of Putin's Russia.[27] It is their top item of international news for a week. The channel broadcasts *Standoff Films'* videos in their program. They

21 See the Standoff Films video, "He did not die. So the officers started beating him up": 6 March 2015, IRC the Verne" https://vimeo.com/122270700.

22 See Basu 2015.

23 A new organisation called *Detained Voices* was founded at this time (https://detainedvoices.com/). Volunteers at *Detained Voices* transcribe statements from people in detention ad verbatim and publish these online. They were especially effective at increasing the news coverage of the March 2015 hunger strikes. Statements from people in detention recorded by *Detained Voices* were quoted by a range of media outlets.

24 See Whelan 2015.

25 Green 2015; Green and Dutta 2015.

26 For example, Noborderer 2015.

27 This was not simply a media success. There are also immigration detention centres in Russia, which are not reported on *Russia Today*. *Russia Today* regularly relishes opportunities to report negative events in the UK. I believe the hunger strikes were appropriated to support *Russia Today*'s own imperial agenda. This exacerbated my concern that the hunger strikes were being reported in a way that seemed (a) unlikely to put productive pressure on the UK Home Office or the private security companies who run UK immigration removal centres by reaching large numbers of UK citizens, but which (b) encouraged the hunger strikers through media coverage nonetheless.

incessantly call the video-makers, asking for quotes, updates, and interviews. I find myself in a dilemma: I do not want to 'speak for' the detainees on hunger strike, a process I have been navigating over the previous two years, but I do want their 'voice' to be heard and their 'speech' to be listened to.

Representation And Re-Presentation

> The unrecognised contradiction within a position that valorises the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual, is maintained by a verbal slippage. Deleuze makes this remarkable pronouncement: "A theory is like a box of tools. Nothing to do with the signifier" … Two senses of representation are being run together: representation as "speaking for," as in politics, and representation as "re-presentation," as in art or philosophy…To cover up the discontinuity with an analogy that is presented as proof reflects again a paradoxical subject-privileging…The banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent. [Spivak 1999: 28]

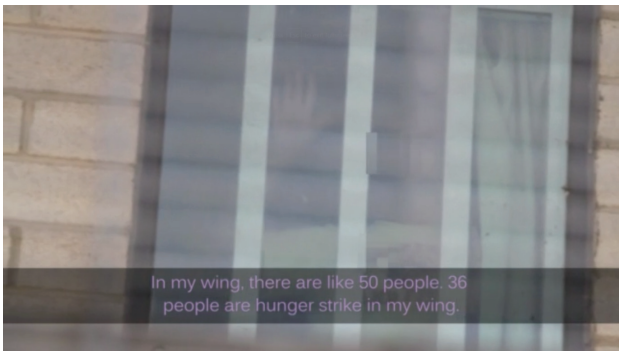

Fig.13 Harmondsworth Hunger Strike 9 March 2015 (1:16) https://vimeo.com/121766147

Fig. 14 Harmondsworth Detainees Launch Hunger Strike Video by Channel 4 (00:45) http://www.channel4.com/news/harmondsworth-immigration-detention-centre-hunger-strike

In the discussion later entitled *Intellectuals and Power* (1977), Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze decry "the indignity of speaking for others" and challenge "representation" itself on ethical, epistemological, and political grounds. They emphasise a critical insight of poststructuralist theory: that reality is too heterogeneous to be reduced to a single narrative: "theory…is practice. But it is local and regional…and not totalising" (Foucault and Deleuze). On this basis, Deleuze opines: "only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf," as "speaking for others…lead[s] to a division of power, to a distribution of this new power which is consequently increased by double repression"; leading Foucault to proclaim: "all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment…can begin the struggle on their own terrain." "Representation is dead," they declare (Foucault and Deleuze 1977).

A monolithic block – "detainees" – is somewhat constructed by *Standoff Films*' re-presentations, despite our efforts to stay "true to" each speaker (Hatley 2000). By necessity, only a small number of people speak about the experience of detention in our videos. Insofar as the videos are understood to represent a more general situation, they obscure multiple heterogeneous 'voices' incarcerated in immigration detention centres. This could be considered "repression" in Deleuze's terms. Equally, in each individual testimony, the *Standoff Films* video-makers cut up and re-arrange each speaker's words to some extent, in an effort to create compelling videos. Could *Standoff Films* be silencing certain 'voices' by 'speaking' in the name of detainees? Could 'protest,' 'hunger strike,' and 'resistance,' function as tropes through which people in detention are forced to express themselves to 'speak' through *Standoff Films*? Could these videos simply turn 'detainees' into 'agents' of 'resistance,' an imagined 'revolutionary' 'class,' rather than 'victims,' reduced to 'bare life' – just another name of a need to be spoken for – while legitimising such a position

with reference to some edited quotes from a selective minority?

"The intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation" insists Gayatri Chakravorty in her essay "Can the subaltern speak?" In eliding two notions of representation, Spivak suggests, Foucault and Deleuze misleadingly present themselves as transparent when they of course re-present others. Spivak suggests that these activist-philosophers thereby renounce the responsibility to represent the interests of those who cannot "speak" and be "heard" "in the First World, under the standardization and regimentation of socialized capital" – namely the "colonial and postcolonial subaltern," who is "defined as being on the other side of an epistemic fracture" (Spivak 1988:40-59). Precisely because "the oppressed under postmodern capital have no necessarily unmediated access to "correct resistance" (Spivak 1988:62), Spivak insists, "radical practice should attend to this double session of representations" (Spivak 1988:33).

The testimony *Standoff Films* re-presents in short videos is not issued by "subaltern" people as defined by Spivak. Even if they were subaltern before they entered the UK, they cease to be properly subaltern by Spivak's definition the moment they speak to any citizen-filmmaker, and thus establish "lines of communication" to "circuits of citizenship," and so insert themselves "into the long road to hegemony," which should be celebrated (Spivak 1988: 40-59). As one node in detainees' access to "circuits of citizenship," the *Standoff Films* video-makers are well positioned to re-present their speech in an effort to represent their interests. This is not to make missionary claims. Unstable migration status, imprisonment, and the vulnerability entailed, restricts detainees' access to channels of communication and discourages openly critical speech for many. Most detainees and ex-detainees maintain anonymity in *Standoff Films'* videos because they fear for their safety. Many more do not speak in the videos at all for this reason.[28]

Fig.15 Harmondsworth Hunger Strike 9 March 2015 (01:10) https://vimeo.com/121766147

In addition to the "epistemic fracture" which Spivak describes as separating the "colonial or postcolonial subaltern" from "hegemonic" "circuits of citizenship," the more overt fact of state-enforced border controls function as a critical barrier to the transmission of subaltern 'speech.' For obvious reasons, it is hard to know how many people are silenced within UK immigration detention centres.

Standoff Films, then, does not 'give voice' – a patronising notion – but transmits and translates 'speech' across physical and cultural barriers. To effectively fulfil this purpose, the *Standoff Films* videos need to be compelling and engage different audiences (Gregory 2006). The solution to Foucault and Deleuze's critique of representation cannot be to transparently 'give voice' – an impossible and often counterproductive task. In making videos, testimony and protest is mediated, by necessity: we should not pretend otherwise. At the same time, we should not fixate on videos' opacity. We cannot forsake re-presentation in the name of simulacral production whose claim on reality exists only in its "effects" (Barthes 1998; Deleuze 1983; Baudrillard 1995). In an immediate context of state violence, often unapprehend by the citizenry at large, the *Standoff Films* video-makers do not want to over-qualify the videos' truth-claims

28 There are numerous instances where media and activist pressures have helped prevent imminent deportations or aided people's asylum claims – but there can be negative consequences for people in detention who are publicly critical of the UK immigration detention system. As a *Standoff Films* video-maker, I have spoken with people in detention who later report that they have been "beaten up" by a group of guards or put in solitary confinement without their belongings for days on end as a result of their public criticism (see *"Four days they keep me in the cell" - Witness Reports on the Aftermath of Campsfield Assault on 29th Nov* https://vimeo.com/116481472 and *Campsfield House: An Immigration Removal Centre* https://vimeo.com/106182843). In these instances, repression did not stop these two people from wanting to speak to the media. Nonetheless, people in detention have reasons to fear for their immediate physical safety. Furthermore, being labelled as "non-compliant" on official records can have longer term consequences for an immigration or asylum case in certain instances.

in the language of subjectivity and contingency, or in experimental explorations of 'voice.'

Rather than see lines of historical differentiation simply as impassable "epistemic fracture[s]" or as "differend" (Lyotard quoted in Spivak et al. 1996) across which one simply cannot communicate (which is surely true to some extent), perhaps we conceptually conceive of communication across historical distinctions by reversing the common sense notion of translation (Benjamin 1969). Rather than grounding the truth-value of the *Standoff Films* videos in the uninterrupted direct transmission of 'voices' from detention, perhaps the videos' truth-claims should be based on the careful listening and quality of interpretation at every stage of the video-making process, by video-makers and by video-audiences? Rather than translating detainees 'voice' into the video-makers own 'speech' – as if we could simply 'give voice' without interpretation – perhaps the video-makers should seek to transform the cinematic 'voice' of the *Standoff Films* videos to better appreciate and incorporate elements of detainees' 'speech'?

The *Standoff Films* videos obviously do not pretend to have an authoritative panoptical view on events in immigration detention. Neither do they deny the authority of their re-presentations. They bring collective demands together with individual self-expressions. The videos display images of detention centre complexes and individual hands pressed up against the windows (fig.15-16). The videos do not disguise their necessary aporias. Rather they emphasise some of the barriers to communication – most importantly, brutal state enforced border controls – in collaboration with people in detention, as part of a genuine effort to speak across these barriers, in a double play of re-presentation and representation.

Wednesday, 11 March 2015

"The response to protest is like they don't have ears to hear it, they don't have heart to beat," one detainee tells me in interview over the phone. I have mixed feelings about the hunger strike. People feel empowered and it is powerful to witness. I hear it in their voices. But, I have seen hunger strikes before. I have seen how the Home Office and media respond. Even if the domestic media attention were significant, and

Fig.16 Harmondsworth Hunger Strike 9 March 2015 (00:53)https://vimeo.com/121766147

Fig.17 From Harmondsworth IRC: The Silence and Noise Around the Hunger Strike (00:32) https://vimeo.com/122324903

even if people in detention start to die, it is far from clear that the Home Office would listen. The hunger strike that received the most media attention in recent years is that of Nigerian asylum seeker Isa Muesza. The Home Office had an official end of life plan with details of how to handle a media enquiry in the event that he die before his deportation.[29] In the end, Isa was deported after 100 days on hunger strike, despite being unable to see or walk. It does not seem likely the hunger strike will be effective in improving the external situation of the hunger strikers. I take active care never to encourage anyone to not eat, or to give personal or legal advice of any kind to people in detention. But making videos about the hunger strikes – because of the hunger strikes, in fact – surely encourages people to use this means to raise awareness. If I did not think the hunger strike was hopeful, why was I representing it? Do these videos actually represent the interests of people in detention? Could I be feeding misplaced hope by echoing detainees' call to be heard back to people in detention?

29 See Allison 2013.

Friday, 13 March 2015

Russia Today broadcasts the March 11th *Standoff Films'* video about Mitie's response to the hunger strike. One of the featured hunger strikers immediately calls me from Harmondsworth IRC: "Yes, I heard my voice in the news...I am really happy that I could hear myself explaining to the world the kind of evil the Home Office, the immigration officer, the caseworker, the Mitie, the security, the evil they are perpetrating in the lives of innocent people. We are all 24 hours sitting in front of the TV watching this story."

At issue is not simply whether I foster or dampen hope with reference to an external political objective; the nature of the relationships I establish across lines of differentiation are inherently important. After all, I am one of a number of channels transmitting information about the hunger strike's reception back to people in detention. The man in Harmmondsworth continues: "We wish other news channels would take this story out. We are very disappointed with the BBC. Why are they not covering our story? Because they are British. They are meant to speak the truth. They are just like the Home Office."

"The Home Office, they are playing ignorant, they know they know they know what they are doing. Let the world, let the MPs, let, let even the Prime Minister should know, he knows all this. The Home Secretary knows all this. We are suffering here, we are slaves here. We are being treated like criminals here… If you die, you die in your room…. Harmonsdsworth and fast track should be ruled out completely. We are being intimidated here. We are scared here. We are being harassed here. We are being threatened here. Please help us, to achieve the truth. Because we want freedom. And that's what we want. Thank you very much."

Collaboration and Appropriation

> I would like to set forth the notion that transmitting an apparatus of production without—as much as possible—transforming it, is a highly debatable procedure even when the content of the apparatus which is transmitted seems to be revolutionary in nature… a substantial part of so-called left-wing writers have no other social function whatever, than eternally to draw new effects from the political situation in order to amuse the public…It made documentaries fashionable. But we should ask: to whom is this technique useful? [Benjamin 1970]

The documentary video-maker should, if we follow Walter Benjamin, transform the video-making apparatus so that rather than turning "political commitment into an object of contemplative pleasure," the video-maker might make "co-workers out of readers or spectators." Rather than be a "benefactor" or an "ideological patron" – an "impossible position" – Benjamin suggests that "the place of the intellectual should be determined, or better, chosen, on the basis of their position in production." We should not simply "report," but "struggle"; we should not "play the role of spectator," but "actively intervene" (Benjamin 1970). We cannot only re-present 'voice,' we must produce directed 'speech' which represents our collective interests.

One way one might transform the video-making "apparatus" is through collaboration. Stable distinctions between the representor and represented – the 'giver' and 'receiver' of 'voice,' the 'speaker' and the 'spoken for' – might be challenged by deliberately and explicitly emphasising the necessary collaborations involved in the production of representations. Collaboration might counteract the "double repression" of "speaking for" others (Foucault and Deleuze 1977), while facilitating wider distributional networks through re-presentations. As Luke Lassiter insists, collaboration is often especially "appropriate when dealing with voice" (Lassiter 2008:75).

Standoff Films' videos are collaborative. They are produced in conversation with detainees' purpose-

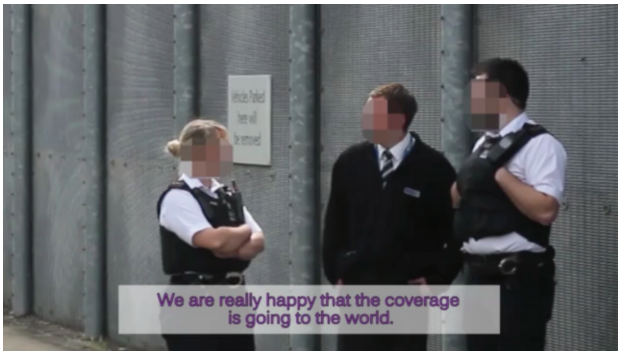

Fig.18 From Harmondsworth IRC: The Silence and Noise Around the Hunger Strike (00:48) https://vimeo.com/122324903

ful 'speech.' There are asymmetries nonetheless. The author may (re)imagine themselves as a producer given their position in production, as Benjamin insists. In the context of identity politics though, where it is not one's essential position in the means of production, but the particularities of one's positionality within fields of power, such as, but not limited to, circuits of citizenship, the author cannot and should not attempt to 'level' their position vis-à-vis other social actors by engaging egalitarian delusions. As the anthropologist Harri Englund points out, a professionalised official rhetoric of collaboration may "dissimulate underlying asymmetries" which take place in a participatory project (Englund 2010). A language of collaboration might disguise appropriation, I would add. Proclamations of radical equality cannot undo participants' different interests. Even though the *Standoff Films*' videos are self-funded and there are no financial profits, how does one equally distribute the social capital of filmmaking to all involved in the production process? Even if I remorse the fact, is it not the case that I advantage myself by making these videos and writing about the process here, while many of the people who went on hunger strike are still locked in detention centres, deported, or struggling to live without legitimate access to money as undocumented migrants?

The issue of appropriation is not simply an issue of re-presentation – who 'speaks' about who – but also representation – whose interests are furthered. Rather than pretending interests are the same, Englund notes that divergent interests can be productive as well as unproductive (Englund 2010). In my own case, it is in fact the difference in my position, as a secure citizen, and my different interests, as a video-maker, rather than a hopeful immigrant or asylum seeker, which might make me potentially helpful to people in detention in the first place. If I was also in detention, I would not be of much additional use.

This is not to excuse enacting privilege with impunity. Our different positionalities might cause us to pause and reflect upon what one is specifically well positioned to accomplish, and to consider and discuss these with others (when possible). Rather than renounce collaboration on the basis of its difficulties in favour of mere witnessing, perhaps we need

Fig.19 From Harmondsworth IRC: The Silence and Noise Around The Hunger Strike (01:41) https://vimeo.com/122324903

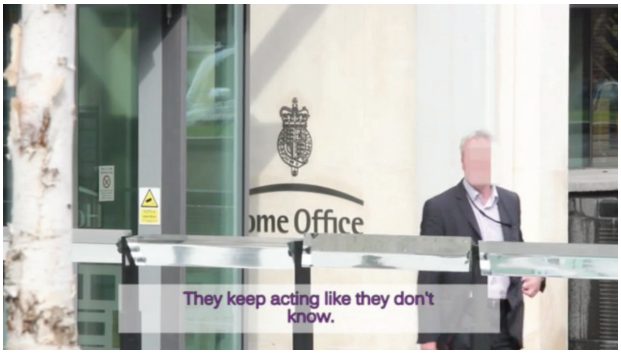

Fig.20 From Harmondsworth IRC: The Silence and Noise Around The Hunger Strike (02:52) https://vimeo.com/122324903

to reinvigorate collaboration on the basis of alliances across and between antagonistic and shared interests, by finding the common ground in our necessarily enjoined struggles for liberation.[30]

Conclusion

In the case of the videos I have made with *Standoff Films*, as we have seen, the video-makers, those represented, and video-audiences, are all active in a process of video-production and interpretation. These videos might be read as transparent re-presentations – 'giving voice,' if you like – whereby people in detention can be heard themselves, more or less accurately. Alternatively, these videos could be labelled as opaque representations – 'speaking for,' if you will – whereby the filmmakers 'speak for' detainees, more or less

30 As this essay has noted, there are many important roles for a 'witness' – one being to reproduce and distribute the witnessing experience for other audiences. Insofar as the resultant representations further the interests of participants whose experiences are 'witnessed,' I think we should emphasise that this is not mere 'witnessing.'

Fig. 21-24 Over 50 detainees go on Hunger Strike at Campsfield House IRC 07.05.14 (clockwise from top left: 4:36, 4:40, 4:50, 4:45) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABm8hZXn5IA

faithfully. In reality, the *Standoff Films* videos are neither simply mimetic re-presentations, nor are they merely simulacral inventions. In between, the abstract co-ordinates of 'giving voice' and 'speaking for,' *Standoff Films'* videos necessarily engage a seemingly simple complex double-play of re-presentation and representation. Multiple speaking and interpreting agents collaborate across lines of historical differentiation with divergent and intersecting interests. They modify the 'voice' and 'speech' of one another in a dialogic process. It is in these social interactions that representations are formed. They take their power (and lack thereof) in this living social context.

At *Standoff Films* we have developed what I have called an 'objectivity without objects.' We re-present detainees' own speech in a collaborative effort to illuminate actually existing political situations to a "witnessing public" (Mclagan 2003). The silencing effects of immigration detention necessitates representation. There are risks. We necessarily interpret the purposeful speech of people in immigration detention. We edit and modify audio-recordings, hoping to incorporate some of the texture and essential meaning of voices recorded from within detention, in an effort to stay "true to" the interests expressed (Hatley 2000). On reflection, rather than engage hubristic fantasies of 'giving voice' or 'speaking for' others, I believe *Standoff Films* seeks to modify our own cinematic voice by listening to people in immigration detention, in an effort to serve an emancipatory expression and politics.

The *Standoff Films'* videos only represent one instance of representing testimony and protest, but this empirical example can help us re-think abstract conceptions. This auto-ethnographic reflection suggests the following three observations to conclude:

'Voice' may be intimately related to experience. [31] It cannot be 'given,' only re-presented. It is necessarily interpreted and mediated in the process. This can be by those who share and those who do not share the experience it is understood to express.

People do not merely express experience, but struggle on its basis, often against its conditions.[32] This essay has employed a distinction between 'voice' and 'speech' to differentiate mere expression and deliberate proclamation. Perhaps those of us

31 'Voice' is often considered important because it expresses particular experiences, often experiences of oppression, marginalisation and other forms of violence. See for instance Goldstein 2012.

32 See Sider 1997.

interested in producing media in the service of an emancipatory politics should not ask whether we 'give voice' accurately, but how people 'speak' through us? This might enable more powerful and considered re-presentations and representations, which employ, rather than fetishise, a number of different 'voices,' to access a range of audiences in different ways.

The power of hearing from particular 'voices,' your own or others,' should not be underestimated. That said, the power of 'voice' is not rooted not in an isolated 'voice,' but in the affects and effects a 'voice' produces when socially activated. To consider the emancipatory potential of certain representations, it seems pressing to not only ask, whose 'voice' speaks, but how might this 'speech' effect whom? In re-presentation and representation, there will necessarily be aporias. The solution is not to refrain from representation, but to consider the silences within representations when possible, and produce more deliberate representations in light of their likely consequences.[33] Further ethnographic study of representational processes in video and other media is needed. Processes of inter-subjective production, distribution, and interpretation need to be analysed beyond the narrow perspectives of 'author' and 'audience' as typically conceived, so that we might better understand the nature and power of different re-presentations and representations in living social contexts.[34] This auto-ethnographic exploration of the inner-dynamics of 'giving voice' from this filmmaker's self-reflective perspective is a nod towards further research in this direction.

33 For further discussion of the importance of acknowledging silences in representations, see Spivak and Morris 2010 and Sider 1997.

34 Much of the anthropological literature on documentary film and video focuses on questions of technical production (e.g. Barbash and Castaing-Taylor 1997); the nature of the medium (e.g. MacDougall and Castaing-Taylor 1998); authorial crafts and intensions (e.g. Henley 2009); histories and theories of production and reception (e.g. Banks and Ruby 2011). This writer hopes for further ethnographic study of the film-production process itself, so that we might better understand the nature of films/videos claims on specific social realities in light of their intersubjective production processes. For one study which explores the complexity of participatory knowledge production see Alexandra 2015.

References

Agamben, Giorgio
1998 Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
2000 Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. New York: Zone Books.
2005 State of Exception. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alexandra, Darcy
2015 Are we Listening Yet? Participatory Knowledge Production through Media Practice: Encounters of Political Listening, in Participatory Visual and Digital Research in Action, eds. Gubrium, Aline, Krista Harper, and Marty Otañez. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Allison, Eric
2013 Home Office issues 'end of life plan' to hunger-striking asylum seeker. The Guardian, November 16. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/16/end-of-life-plan-hunger-striker.

Aristotle, Hippocrates George Apostle, and Lloyd P. Gerson
1986 Aristotle's Politics. Grinnell, Iowa: Peripatetic Press.

Bailey, Richard
2009 Up Against the Wall: Bare Life and Resistance in Australian Immigration Detention. Law and Critique 20(2):113-32.

Banks, Marcus, and Jay Ruby
2011 Made to be Seen: Perspectives on the History of Visual Anthropology. Chicago; London; University of Chicago Press.

Barbash, Ilisa, and Lucien Castaing-Taylor
1997 Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films & Videos. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Basu, Suswati
2015 Yarl's Wood protest: we're not animals, we just want respect. Channel 4, March 4. http://www.channel4.com/news/yarls-wood-immigration-centre-protests-hunger-strike-threat.

Baudrillard, Jean
1995 Simulacra and Simulation. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Barthes, Roland
1998 The Death of the Author. *In* Art and

Interpretation: An Anthology of Readings in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art. Eric Dayton, ed. Pp 383-386. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview.

Behar, Ruth
1996 The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks your Heart. Boston: Beacon Press.

Benjamin, Walter
1969 Task of the Translator. *In* Illuminations. New York: Schocken Books.
1970 trans. The Author as Producer. New Left Review (62):83.

Bernardot Marc
2008 Camps d'étrangers. Bellecombe-en-Bauges: éditions du croquant.

Couldry, Nick
2010 Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism. Los Angeles, London: SAGE.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Rosalind Krauss
1983 Plato and the Simulacrum. October (27)45-56.

Ellis, Carolyn S., and Arthur P. Bochner
2006. Analyzing Analytic Autoethnography: An Autopsy. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 35(4):429-49.

England, Charlotte
2014 Did an Oxfordshire Immigration Detention Centre Try to Cover Up an Assault? Vice, December 10. http://www.vice.com/read/campsfield-house-immigration-removal-centre-charlotte-england-832.

Englund, Harri
2010 The Anthropologist and His Poor. *In* Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics. Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield, eds. School for Advanced Research Press: Santa Fe, New Mexico.

European Court of Human Rights
The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. http://www.echr.coe.int/pages/home.aspx?p=basictexts (accessed August 27 2016).

Fassin, Didier
2012 Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foucault, Michel and Gilles Deleuze
1977 Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. https://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze. Accessed March 9 2016.

Goldstein, Diane E.
2012 Rethinking Ventriloquism: Untellability, Chaotic Narratives, Social Justice, and the Choice to Speak For, About, and Without. Journal of Folklore Research: An International Journal of Folklore and Ethnomusicology 49(2):179-98.

Gubrium, Aline C., Elizabeth L. Krause, and Kasey Jernigan
2014. Strategic Authenticity and Voice: New Ways of Seeing and Being Seen as Young Mothers through Digital Storytelling. Sexuality Research and Social Policy 11 (4): 337-47.

Green, Chris
2015 Harmondsworth: Asylum seekers' hunger strike spreads to second centre. The Independent, March 10. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/harmondsworth-asylum-seekers-hunger-strike-spreads-to-second-centre-10099111.html.

Green, Chris and Kunal Dutta
2015 Harmondsworth hunger strike: Migrants at removal centre protest against human rights deprivations. The Independent, March 9. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/harmondsworth-hunger-strike-migrants-at-removal-centre-protest-against-human-rights-deprivations-10096803.html.

Gregory, Sam
2006 Transnational Storytelling: Human Rights, Witness, and Video Advocacy. Vol. 108. Oxford, UK: American Anthropological Association.

Haglund, Molly
2012 The Criminalization of Asylum Seekers. Right to Remain, July 6. http://www.righttoremain.org.uk/blog/guest-post-the-criminalization-of-asylum-seekers/.

Hatley, James
2000 Suffering witness: The Quandary of Responsibility after the Irreparable. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Henley, Paul
2009 The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the Craft of Ethnographic Cinema. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Hill Collins, Patricia
2002 Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment. 2nd ed.; Rev. 10th anniversary ed. New York; London: Routledge.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service
First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum). https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-immigration-and-asylum (accessed August 27 2016).

Hughes, Bob
2012 Fears For Health of Dafuri Detainees as Hunger Strike at Campsfield IRC Continues. Close Campsfield, June 4 2012. https://closecampsfield.wordpress.com/2012/06/04/fears-for-health-of-darfuri-detainees-as-hunger-strike-at-campsfield-irc-continues/.

Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith
1982. All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, but Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies. New York, N.Y: Feminist Press.

Lassiter, Luke Eric
2008 Moving Past Public Anthropology and Doing Collaborative Research. NAPA Bulletin 29(1): 70-86.

Lorde, Audre
1984 Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.

MacDougall, David, and Lucien Castaing-Taylo
1998 Transcultural Cinema. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Marcus, George E., and Michael M. J. Fischer
1986 Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McLagan, Meg
2003 Human Rights, Testimony, and Transnational Publicity. The Scholar and Feminist Online 2(1). Electronic document, http://sfonline.barnard.edu/ps/printmmc.htm, accessed March 12 2016.
2006 Technologies of Witnessing: The Visual Culture of Human Rights. American Anthropologist 108(1):191.

Migration Observatory
2013 Migration in the News: Portrayals of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in National British Newspapers, 2010-2012, August 8. http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/migration-in-the-news/.
2016 Briefing: Immigration Detention in the UK, September 1. http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-detention-in-the-uk/.

Minh-Ha, Trinh T.
1989 Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

The Multicultural Politic
2014 Detainees Protest After Brutality by MITIE Guards at Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre, December 2. http://www.tmponline.org/2014/12/02/detainees-protest-campsfield/.

Nichols, Bill
2001 Introduction to Documentary. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Negri, Antoni
2007 Giorgio Agamben: The Discreet Taste of the Dialectic. *In* Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life. Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCaroli, eds. Pp 109-125. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

No Deportations
2015 IRCS 'Self-Harm' (Attempted Suicide) and those on 'Self-Harm Watch' (at risk of Suicide) 2015. No Deportations. http://www.no-deportations.org.uk/Media-2014/Self-Harm2015.html.

Noborderer
2015 Harmondsworth Migration Prison: Mass Protests, Hunger Strike, Solidarity Demo," Rabble March 8. https://rabble.org.uk/harmondsworth-migration-prison-mass-protests-hunger-strike-solidarity-demo/.

Oswell, David
2009. Infancy and Experience: Voice, Politics and Bare Life. European Journal of Social Theory 12 (1): 135-54.

Pennington, Jed
2014 Immigration Detention – A Shameful, Inhumane System: Jed Pennington on How the Home Office Fails to Comply with the Law. Socialist Lawyer, no. 67: 20-21 http://www.bhatt-murphy.co.uk/media/files/JCP_Haldane_article.pdf.

Phelps, Jerome
2014 A crisis of harm in immigration detention. Open Democracy, September 15. https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/jerome-phelps/crisis-of-harm-in-immigration-detention.

Portelli, Allessandro
2006 What Makes Oral History Different. *In* The Oral History Reader. 2nd ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. Pp 32-42. London: Routledge.

Rajaram, Prem Kumar and Car Grundy-Warr
2004 The Irregular Migrant as Homo Sacer: Migration and Detention in Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand. International Migration 42(1): 33–64.

Rancière, Jacques
2004 Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man? The South Atlantic Quarterly 103(2):297-310.

Rahola F.
2007 La Forme-Camp: Pour une Genealogie des Lieux de Transit et d'Internement du Present. Cultures & Conflits 68:31–50.

Rosaldo, M. Z.
1980 The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding. Signs 5(3):389-417.

Rosaldo, Renato
1980 Doing Oral History. Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice(4): 89-99.
1989 Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Boston, MA: Beacon.

Scott, Joan W.
1991 The Evidence of Experience. Critical Inquiry 17 (4):773-97.

Schinkel, W.
2009 "Illegal Aliens" and The State, or: Bare Bodies vs The Zombie. International Sociology 24(6): 779–806.

Sider, Gerald M.
1997. Against Experience: The Struggles for History, Tradition, and Hope among a Native American People. *In* Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations. Gerald M. Sider and Gavin A. Smith, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty
1999 A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, and Rosalind C. Morris
2010 Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea. New York: Columbia University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, Donna Landry, and Gerald M. MacLean
1996 The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. New York: Routledge.

Souter, James
2011 Asylum decision-making in the UK: disbelief or denial? Open Democracy, April 4. https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/james-souter/asylum-decision-making-in-uk-disbelief-or-denial.

Taylor, Diane
2016 Suicide attempts at UK immigration removal centres at all-time high. The Guardian, April 4. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/04/suicide-attempts-uk-immigration-removal-centres-all-time-high-home-office-figures.

Thompson, Paul
1978 The Voice of the Past: Oral History. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brian Whelan
2015 Harmondsworth detainees launch hunger strike. Channel 4, March 9. http://www.channel4.com/news/harmondsworth-immigration-detention-centre-hunger-strike.

Wolf, Margery
1992 A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Yeo, Colin
2014 Questions to a bisexual asylum seeker in detention. Free Movement, January 24. https://www.freemovement.org.uk/questions-to-a-bisexual-asylum-seeker-in-detention/.

Ziarek, Ewa P.
2008 Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender. South Atlantic Quarterly 107 (1):89–105.

Videography

29 November 2014: Detainees Protest at Campsfield House IRC https://vimeo.com/113244678.

Campsfield House: An Immigration Removal Centre https://vimeo.com/106182843.

Detainees expose bed bugs & mice at Harmondsworth https://vimeo.com/106044102.

"Four days they keep me in the cell" – Witness Reports on the Aftermath of Campsfield Assault on 29th Nov: https://vimeo.com/116481472.

From Harmondsworth IRC: The Silence and Noise Around the Hunger Strike HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/122324903.

Harmondsworth Hunger Strike 9 March 2015 (01:38) https://vimeo.com/121766147.

"He did not die. So the officers started beating him up": 6 March 2015, IRC the Verne https://vimeo.com/122270700.

Harmondsworth hunger striker speaks out 15.3.15 https://vimeo.com/123100987.

Hunger Strike at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre forces Home Office to negotiate, May, 2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow8MaauT13c.

Over 50 detainees go on Hunger Strike at Campsfield House IRC 07.05.14 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABm8hZXn5IA.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp. 98-107

Under the Skin: Negotiating the Affect of Tattoo Removal

Fraser Kendrick GermAnn
The University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: This autoethnography analyses the construction of personhood in relation to tattoos and their removal by exploring the affective response the author had during his first tattoo removal experience. Influenced by Renato Rosaldo's imperialist nostalgia, the paper explores how this response was negotiated through the memories of a younger self in conjunction with present circumstances as a graduate student. In doing so, the paper reflects on the ever-changing relationship between the author and the tattoo and the role this connection has played and continues to play within the constitution of the author's subjectivity.

KEY WORDS: tattoo removal, effacement, materiality, affect, personhood, subjectivity

In the Papua New Guinean Highlands:

> The sun set over the forest canopy and cast orange light over the darkening leaves, and high up in a tree Waniol's clothes hung in a silhouette. They had swayed there for months, each day looking a little more faded, a little more tattered by the sun, and the rain, and the wind. The child died months ago, and the clothes were Wani's doing: a father's tribute to a lost son, a reminder of his boy. The day he hung them Wani made a pledge: only when the elements claimed the clothing, reducing them to nothing, would he let himself move on without Waniol.
>
> Hanging clothes to grieve was not a traditional Asabano practice. This was Wani's way, yet it resonated with the views and beliefs that underlined the practices he grew up with. Namely, that objects carry the memory of those who have used them previously; that they stand in for people in their absence; that they are the repositories for social relationships; and that curating such objects was tantamount to the maintenance of the relationships imbued within them. Continuity, here, underlined seeming difference, and as Waniol's clothes deteriorated, high up in the branches, so too did Wani's connection to Waniol as a father.[1]

In the Canadian Prairies:

> When 'Mr. Leadfingers' jabbed his needle into my shoulder the first time I remembered saying some-

1 The story of Wani and Waniol comes from Roger Lohman's (2010) work, which focuses on memento practices in Asabano society. Personal relationships in Asabano society, he contends, are sustained through memories, embodied within objects that stand for an individual who is not present to the beholder of the object. How well one preserves a memento relates to their ability to maintain the relationship it represents. In mortuary contexts, he notes, normal life is ruptured and memento practices become ways of responding to this rupture. The preoccupation with the curation (to remember) and/or dissolution (to forget) of mementos reveals how one deals emotionally with the memory of the deceased. His discussion on the maintenance of mementos, in Asabano society, provided me with an interesting lens to see my tattoo through.

thing along the lines of *holy shit*, closely followed by, *this was a baad idea you JACKASS! You are SO not doing this again!* Of course, I didn't say it out loud; that would've defeated the purpose of getting a tattoo, when you're 18 years old, trying to be tough, manly. It wasn't hard to read my face though. The moment he dug in, my body tensed stiffer than a frozen corpse and my eyes shot wide, bigger than cantaloupes. The pain was sobering. *Oh this is a bad idea all right – you Jackass*. But at the time, I didn't know he was being heavy handed, digging too deep, scarring me, making it more painful than what it ought to be. I sat there, stiffed and Disney-eyed, waiting, wishing, welcoming the prospect of any interruption that would end his drilling expedition – an expedition that only seemed to reap blood. From the corner of my eye my shoulder was smeared and dripping red, smelling of ink and alcohol, under the hot light of a lamp. It was hard to look at. I pictured instead the prospect of a plane crash – the shrapnel from the wreckage interrupting Mr. Leadfingers. I hoped for a drug raid – SWAT teams flash banging the room, putting an end to the gouging. I even wished for a hostile alien invasion – their tractor beams pulling me away from the needle. But none of them ever came. No planes whistled into tail-spins, no tactical boots clunked towards the door, and no death rays zapped onwards to sound out any chance of an interruption. There was only the buzzing of the needle and the strained sound it made when it bogged deep – ennn *eennnnnn* enn *ennnnnn* ennnnnnn. It was too late anyways; deep down I knew, no matter the calamity, I was committed and was so, well before I met Mr. Leadfingers and his bloody little needle, and even well before I considered the booking. I'd sold myself, long ago, on a vision and a desire to express outwardly what I saw inside myself: personal qualities I perceived to be integral and eternal. The needle buzzed on – enn *ennnnn* ennn. I wondered if I could last the hour-long booking; I thought nothing about the length of eternity or the prospect of change – en, *ennnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn*.

On the Canadian West Coast:

Ten years later I find myself on a similar chair, but this one is green. I lay on my side in fetal-like position, sleeve rolled up, listening to the humdrum of a fan cooling the laser. "It will feel like an electric shock," the dermatologist says, "let me know how the pain is. Ready?" I nod and hold still. The laser's snap is at once hot and cold, and it sounds like a mini-jackhammer, pounding damp clay. "How does it feel?" she asks. It reminds me of Mr. Leadfingers's gouging, but I am okay. I admire the texture of the rubber ball she gave me for the pain in a loose grip, instead of squeezing it. The little jackhammer's rhythm undulates me into a sleepy state, yet its snap grounds me in the moment. I am aware but drowsy. My mind floats, as if on a cloud, and the laser guides me away from the pressures of everyday life as a graduate student. I no longer feel the pressure to read, to write, to present; the pressure to think better, smarter, faster; to synthesize, analyze, criticize – the pressure to excel under overwhelming pressures. She prompts the question again and it annoys me. I know I should not be, but her inquiry breaches the experience, forcing me to pull outside it and evaluate – back to the world of analysis and critique; back to the world of papers, readings, expectations, and insecurities; back to the world of pressure. I give her a low number just to please her: I want to return to the jackhammer's rhythm, but then the treatment is over. I arise from my fetal position and look into the mirror and see a pallid tattoo under puffed skin, rising from my shoulder like an alien spacecraft readying to depart for their home world. I realize the violence of effacement, through the mirror's image, and I swell with a sadness that makes me feel as if I've betrayed someone. *What am I doing!? What have I just erased? What am I leaving behind, who am I leaving behind?* Where are the sounds of 747s, police, or Martians in a time like this?

It felt like a bad sunburn as I walked home from the clinic and it continued to burn that way for a week, until the swelling and the blisters subsided. In that week the laser made its presence known, always reminding me of its effect on my shoulder each time my clothing rubbed against it, each time the skin became taut, yet the sensation that concerned me more was the one in my stomach. Sadness was the least of what I expected to feel that day, looking in the mirror; it swelled and blistered, too, but unlike

my shoulder, which returned to normal, this feeling lingered in a swollen state, deep down in my stomach. It is the reason why I write this now: to understand how I have come to mourn the very thing I aimed to efface.[2]

Laser tattoo removal works by penetrating the top layers of skin with a concentrated light beam designed to disrupt the dormant state tattoos reside in, breaking up their pigments into small particles the body can flush away. Several treatments are necessary, punctuated by six to eight weeks in between them for the skin to re-heal and for the body to purge the broken down particles.

Each time I look into the mirror the tattoo feels a little less than what it was the day before. I'm reminded of Wani, watching his son's clothes flutter in the evening breeze, withering away and allowing his role as a father to flicker towards its end too. Wani's grief was palpable, and it was clear what was at stake when the elements finally came to claim the remnants of Waniol's clothes – but what about me? What was I watching fade in the mirror? What role, what piece of my identity, was being carried off bit-by-bit, and what would be left when that last particle departed?

Looking at my younger self, I searched my past for answers to these questions and in my hunt I recalled a moment of panic I had, shortly after I had booked the tattoo appointment, which prompted me to look to my future self for advice. *How would I feel about the tattoo in the years to come?* – I asked my future self, but of course, he never responded. I could only speculate what he might say and speculate I did.

Walter Benjamin (2007) once described the figure of history as an angel looking upon all that has happened. With his wings extended he catches the gusts of time, which incessantly propel him forward. His position, however, comes with a price: he sees all that has happened – but nothing more – for his back is turned towards the future, where it remains out of sight and unknown to him. Looking back I see a much younger self, deliberating the tattoo, desperately trying to peer into the future to see how he might feel about it when he was older. I see how he convinced himself to go through with it by reassuring himself that he was banking on a sure thing for a tattoo. It was something permanent, he thought, something that would always be true and integral to his sense of self. He made a bold declaration, choosing that tattoo; however, like the angel of history, his view of the future was opaque. He could never truly imagine what I feel now, nor what the tattoo would come to mean to me.

Such boldness is something I find so characteristic of him, and as admirable as I would like to see this quality, I cannot help but see it as consisting of a naivety, tempered by a stubborn pride that sometimes bordered on arrogance. How could I really know what my future self would think, and how could I ever think that the tattoo I chose was timeless, in any sense of that word?

It is hard to answer these questions too, because unlike the angel of history, when I look back through time I do not have a clear vantage point to objectively assess that younger, scrawny self and what the tattoo actually meant to him. I can only recall instances and fragments, partial moments that reveal what it meant to him or at least what I think it might have meant to him. Ten years have passed and ironically I find myself still speculating, this time in the other direction.

2 The central focus in this paper has been largely influenced by Renato Rosaldo's (1993) concept of imperialist nostalgia: a paradox predicated on 'killing' an entity and mourning its 'death,' which in turn buffers people from the reality of their actions, and hides the processes of (often violent) change effected by the mourners, who veil themselves under the cloak of an 'innocent yearning' for the way things used to be. Moreover, nostalgia invokes pleasant memories and occludes the ugly side of history, reinforcing innocent views of an imperialist past while hiding its brutality. To demystify this process scholars have assumed that ideologies, employed in imperialist nostalgia, are of a fictional nature built to deceive people of what is actually going on. Consequently, they rush to show what is 'actually' going on. For Rosaldo this is too simplistic; it short-circuits the analyses, because it fails to illustrate how people are convinced to believe these ideologies in the first place. If we can see through these guises, he asks, then why not study the actual interest that has been concealed, rather than just pointing it out? Demystifying ideologies, he maintains, runs the risk of perpetuating other ideologies. He suggests a process of dismantlement instead, where the ideology's voice is allowed to play out and collapse through exposing its compelling but ultimately contradictory and pernicious qualities. Though I cannot say I followed Rosaldo's words to a 'T' I did try to let the 'voices' play themselves out to better understand how I came to feel the way I did in that moment. That interest also led me to Kathleen Stewart's (2007) work on affect and her understanding that affects exist in a pre-representational world, full of potential. Consequently, from the moment an affective surge takes place, there is no telling where it may lead. To that tune I followed my thoughts and reflections, regarding my affective moment in the mirror, to see where these introspections led me as I wrote this paper.

What I do know, however, is that at one time my past self looked into the opaque future to seek out an older self and his guidance, and now I'm peering back, attempting to seek out that younger self and his rational. A decade separates us, and though he fails in his attempts to see through it to find me, I, on the other hand, can see him. Yet to do so, I realize I must peer through that decade, which has shaped both of us in ways that neither of us could have imagined; ways which have altered how I now understand him and myself; ways which are invariably different from how he would have understood himself. As such, I have to take into consideration that meaning is made in the present, and my present has a ten-year thick lens to peer through – a filter for meaning whose screen has my present circumstances in interest – when I look at this younger self. Minding the gap means realizing that what I see of him is not actually him, the way he truly was, but rather the way I have come to remember him, given my current circumstances as a graduate student.[3]

Through the lens, I see myself in an indoor soccer match, just hours after sitting stiffed and Disney-eyed in Mr. Leadfinger's chair. The pitch is shaped like a hockey arena, its walls adorned with white puck board and two closet-shaped cutouts, lined with dark blue tarps, stand at either end for nets. I see a ball lobbed towards centre court and I am rushing to it, striking it like a freight train would a golf cart in a game of chicken before it could pounce the green plastic turf and bounce over me. I felt the ball mold to my foot upon impact and then it was gone.

I never saw the goal, no one did, but we heard its sound when it careened the top left corner of the net. It was plane crash loud, and the goalie stood stiff with his hands halfway up in the air, his eyes the size of cantaloupes, like mine were only a few hours before. The ball was already bouncing and rolling its way to a stop at the other side of the blue net by the time he winced up over his right shoulder to inspect the corner. His defensemen shared the same Disney look, dumbfounded and startled by the bang, they gawked for answers and they eventually turned to me. No one expected a goal to be made from the centreline, nor the sound this one made. Even my forwards stared at me with the same look, everyone did, and for a moment it felt as if I had made some sort of egregious error, like I had violated some sort of taboo worse than incest. All those on the court stood stiff, frozen, as if ordered so by a cop, and when the goal's echo faded there was a silence more disconcerting to me than the boom itself.

The moment lingered until a friend from the bench broke the spell by standing up, thrusting his fist in the air, and shouting "Yeah!" With the silence punctured the rest of my teammates erupted with shouts of their own, and the audience, up in the bleachers, clapped and whistled, and so, too, did the other team. The accolades swelled the pitch as an opponent walked past, clapping and nodding his head, his face still startled. Our eyes locked. He looked at me as if I were an alien or a horror of some other sort, to be revered and/or feared. I gave him a small nod and smiled back, but in a way that encouraged the idea that I wielded some sort of a thunderous wrath, which ought not be trifled with. Underneath my seeming magnanimity, though, I remarked how a second ago I wore the same face – Disney-eyed and shell shocked – and I wondered if he had seen that.

My startle, however, was momentary at best, although with the silence and the pause before the accolades it felt like a decade. But even that pause and that silence added to my pride, for within the goal, and the reaction to it, there was a feeling of intention and control, and it felt like it was backed by a surfeit of power and strength that shocked and awed – and it was all mine. I was a force to be reckoned with in that moment, and that feeling – that boldness – was what I associated with the tattoo, bandaged underneath my jersey. Yet the goal was not solely responsible for that feeling and its association. For some time I had felt that boldness, albeit far less intensely, on the pitch (and off it) amidst opponents and teammates, most of whom were just a year or so younger than me, still in high school, not yet working in the real world, like I was – getting stronger everyday from hard physical labor. If I was a man, they were just boys, and the

3 Victor Turner (1974, 1980) applies a performative lens to meaning making in social dramas, stating that the narratives of these dramas unfold in the present and reorder the events of the past in ways that fit the present circumstances of the ensuing drama. Culture is processual, he would say. I used this idea to understand how meaning is constructed in the present

tattoo further signified that distinction: an outward manifestation of what I had long felt deep under the skin. But the tattoo was more than just emblematic of manhood; it constituted manliness through the pain. Consider Mr. Leadfingers's gouging: I did not yield, nor shy from his needle, I took it stiffly, and though I wished it would stop, I endured. The tattoo was a rite of passage, whose transformative capacity was engendered through its pain, marking my ability to handle such discomfort (like a man) and making me all the more tougher (like a man, as well) in the process. In turn, the passage made me feel bolder and it led me to act and think as such.[4]

I wore that sentiment on my shoulder – a badge of honour, which declared that the boldness of the tattoo paralleled the boldness of my thoughts and actions. I took pride in that parallel and gladly flashed my colours whenever the opportunity arose, especially during the summer or travelling abroad, when I could wear muscle shirts.

I still think of that goal: the freight train kick, the thunderous boom, the shell shocked looks, and the cheers that followed, but in these reflections I see myself as a boy, not a man. Some time ago the parallel, between the tattoo and my thoughts and actions, buckled. When I see the tattoo from the corner of my eye, or catch it in the mirror, I recall the boy who commissioned it and the startled-ness that too often lurked beneath his confidence, like that split second after the goal before the pride sunk in. The boldness he projected now seems more like a boyish bluff, rather than communicating and constituting any actual power and strength he may have had. The bold veneer had cracked and through the fissures stood a reflection of a younger self, enthralled by a blunt stubbornness and a general lack of awareness as to how to approach and make sense of the world. I now pair the muscle shirts, I have left, with pyjama pants – my Netflix outfit; they never leave my apartment, nor do they ever see the light of day, and by extension, neither does the tattoo.

My shifting relationship to the tattoo leads me again to Wani and his choice to hang his son's clothes in a tree. If Waniol had not died he would have eventually worn and/or grown out of those clothes. They would have been replaced, likely, without much thought, and there, likely, would not have been a marked change in Wani's identity as a father when the clothes were discarded in favour of new ones. But Waniol did die, and when Wani returned to the village, upon hearing of his son's death, the village was no longer the same to him, for all he could see were the places Waniol used to play – the grief so sharp, it forced him to leave the village for a time, after the funeral, to ease his pain.

Waniol's passing ruptured the mundane meanings imbued within the places and things that made up Wani's everyday life, causing him to re-signify his world in response, including the clothes. The process gave the clothes heavier meanings, it imbued them with pain, and grief, and the brunt of the father-son relationship; they no longer held their previous meanings in the same way they used to, prior to the rupture. Though the sun bleached the colours of Waniol's clothes while they hanged, the meanings they held before his death had faded well before they were even hung; their past lustre evermore difficult to see under the light of the present.

Waniol's death was life altering for Wani, the trauma causing him to radically reshuffle the fundamental meanings of his everyday life in ways that partially foreclosed the older meanings it once held. Such events force us to renegotiate our relationships to the things, places, and people that make up our lives, and such negotiations are ongoing. They forge, break, and remold these relationships, shed new light on them, and make us see them differently through each successive event, one after another, continually impacting our lives, like incessant waves.

A major event in my life has been graduate school – a trauma of another sort – and though it is not the only event in my life that has caused me to renegotiate my relationship to the tattoo, it is the most recent, and therefore, the brightest light under which I see it.[5]

4 For more on the transformative qualities of rituals and rites of passages see Victor Turner's (1974) work on these topics.

5 Again I could invoke Victor Turner's (1974, 1980) performative lens to make sense of these re-significations through present circumstances, but when I wrote this section I was thinking more of Nancy Ries' (2002) use of a Marxist perspective on trauma and terror. From her standpoint she holds that 'the base' gives meanings to 'the superstructure' and if the base is affronted by violence, the effects of this assault

In grad school, there is the demoralization that capsizes you after you have strained through another week's dense readings and the professor's interpretation nullifies your efforts to understand it; there is the incessant current of work – the books, the articles, the responses, the presentations, the essays – and the sense of inadequacy, as if everyone is smarter than you; there is the feeling that you have slipped into graduate school, they made a mistake and it will only be a matter of time before they realize it, and each time you submit a paper or speak up in class you think this could be it, your time is up: *did you see how they looked at you after you talked about Mondzain?!;* there's the feeling that your faults shine brighter than a lighthouse and everyone can see them; there is the staying up all night, reading till your eyes want to bleed – the week has only just started, but you feel like you are already behind, again; there's the push to be more critical, to write faster, to think faster, to analyze as if it were second nature and to continue pushing until it is second nature; there's the feeling that you don't know how to be critical enough; there is the guilt in going out for drinks once a month when you could be doing more work, because there's always more to be done and the feeling that you're not doing enough as is – *forget taking a day off;* there's the misgivings that even if you survive till graduation there won't be a future for you with this degree anyways: *you may be treading tribulation for nothing!;* there's the feeling of being stretched thin, drained and breathless, but you have to keep kicking your legs: your face bobs the water's surface as you look skywards, still kicking, hoping to find solid ground soon; there's the feeling of no longer recognizing the person you were before you entered grad school: the mirror's image speaks not of this past self, but of sleepless nights and strain – the waves you've endured so far and the ones still to come: the next reading, assignment, presentation, the next paper – each of them crashing and swirling you below, towards the undertow that draws you further away from the shore of who you once were.

Grad school breaks you down. And in your broken state it alters you under the pretences of personal development; from the ashes rises the phoenix. It churns you, swirls you, and spits you out anew, for better or worse, onto new coastlines. Your eyes may sting with the water's salt, but they're daggers now, sharp enough to pierce reality with penetrating insight. But such transformations, however, come with a cost: to move forward in the name of progress means to leave something behind.[6]

My years before university, and more so before I became a graduate student, feel like my *Jahilyya*, a term that references the pre-Islamic era in Islam prior to when God spoke to Muhammad, through the angel Gabriel. *Jahilyya* translates loosely as an unknowingness of God's way, an era of ignorance, and for some time I have felt that the existence of my *Jahilyya* has been emblazoned on my shoulder. The tattoo is a remnant, a survival from a previous era serving no real purpose to me in the present other than as a humiliating connection to the boy I once was and how I perceive him to be steeped in a naiveté that he overcompensated for by pretending to be bold. The ink reminds me of all the matters I fumbled during this time, those painful moments in life I could have handled better if it were not for this overcompensating bluntness that was meant to assuage my ignorance. Graduate school has been about leaving this 'bold' boy behind, breaking through this veneer in search of real strength below it, under the skin. It has been about confronting personal insecurities and limitations and to move past them, or learning to work with them, rather than hiding them under a tough – superficial – exterior.[7]

Removing the tattoo was part of removing that exterior, to push forward without being tied to this younger self. Good riddance, I thought to myself when I began thinking of laser removal, and that is why, as I looked in the mirror after that first treatment, it struck me as odd when I felt anything but good. The questions – *What am I doing!? What have I*

can reverberate through the entire system and radically alter the meanings found within the superstructure, like the way Waniol's clothing changed meaning for Wani after Waniol's death.

6 When I wrote this section I had Donna Haraway's (1988) notion of situated knowledges in mind, which in short, states that from different perspectives one gleans different types of insights and ways of knowing the world.

7 With respect to cultural survivals see E.B. Tylor's (2012) work. With respect to Jahilyya and Gabriel approaching Muhammad see Subodh Kapoor's (2004) and Karen Armstrong's (2007) work, respectively.

just erased? What am I leaving behind, who am I leaving behind? – combined with a swelling sadness shook me with overwhelming loss. In the mirror's moment, the violence of effacement confronted and forced me to look at the tattoo differently. It was another life event, carrying a trauma of its own, sharp enough to rupture the meanings the previous wave (grad school) had swirled and shaped. It caused me to rethink the younger self I saw anchored to the tattoo, whom I had just begun to sever ties to. Looking in the mirror, I could not articulate who that boy was – that younger self; I only felt the guilt of betraying him, whoever he was.

The image of this boy came to me, weeks later, while studying with my friend, April, in a downtown coffee shop. Earlier that week I presented the anecdote of getting and removing the tattoo to my graduate cohort. I had an idea as to the direction I wanted to take within this paper and it was time to flesh it out.

We sat in the corner of the café, with our backs to the wall. I surveyed the patrons sitting before us and tapped my pen on a blank page in my notebook. Road blocked. *How can I flesh out this paper when I can't articulate who this boy is?* I began to think about my younger years, the travelling I did – all those places and all those mishaps and gong shows. There was the time I got deported from Brazil, another time when I was involved in a high-speed chase in Bali. I thought of the work I did in the oilfields back in Alberta – the long hours, the hard work, the thick skin you needed for the elements and the abusive work relationships. I thought of my circle of friends, the way we were before I went to university and before they started having kids. I recalled the cigarette-hazed garage we spent our nights in and how we used to laugh.

April looked over and smirked at my crooked head, navel-gazing the blue tiled ceiling above the espresso machine. I told her of my quandary and handed over the anecdote I presented in class. The two paragraphs are personal and private, I am not used to sharing such thoughts and feelings, and it made me feel exposed, sitting there, watching her peering into me through my self-portrait.

"You were really hard on yourself weren't you?" she said, handing back the pages. I could not tell if she liked it or not, but I expected the worse and felt all the more embarrassed for sharing the story. She pointed to my use of 'Jackass' within the first paragraph: a pseudonym I often used for myself in my internal monologue, back then. I jumped to my own defense: I did not always use the term in a pejorative sense, the way she saw it. 'Jackass' was more a comedic term of endearment to me, used often in awkward instances, including those times where I was deported from Brazil and chased in Bali. Such stories were prized mini-dramas I enjoyed retelling and told often, laughing and joking, always emphasizing myself as the butt end of the joke – the Jackass.

These were moments of humility, but cherished moments all the more, for each of them revealed a boy who boldly stuck his neck out and was capable of laughing at his failures when things soured. Feeling shameful or sheepish within a situation made the event worth going through, just for the story itself, and knowing that made dealing with those moments of humility all the more amenable to a positive outlook, during its unfolding and afterwards. I used to love that aspect of myself – the boldness to laugh off my shortcomings and misfortunes – but it has been a while since I have been able to laugh that way. Somewhere between my last trip abroad and grad school it fell to the wayside, and it was April who led me back to it and to the boy, I realize, I have been mourning all this time.

Upon entering grad school, the stakes felt higher, and it became harder to laugh under the constant pressure of trying to stay afloat amidst the cresting waves of essays, readings, and presentations. It is hard to laugh off even the little things, like a bunk grade when it can carry so much weight while you tread a sea of insecurity. A plus or a minus could be all the difference in feeling like you belong in a program, especially one you think you have been mistakenly accepted into; it is the difference that tells you whether or not what you say and write has a place amongst your peer's comments and work. Conversely, a plus or a minus can make all the difference for getting that grant, scholarship, or any other recognition that could set you apart – from your peers – within an extremely competitive world.

It is also hard to laugh off bungled first impres-

sions, when there is always the imperative to advance your prospects through social networking, building those important relationships with professors and colleagues. The right relationships with the right people can open up whole other worlds, which grades alone cannot do. There is always the pressure to meet, and to speak, and to make good with those who can lead you to these worlds.

When the stakes appear high these little things – the pluses and the minuses, the handshakes – feel as if they can elevate or relegate you in ways you had not thought of before you became a grad student. It is hard to laugh at your failures when you feel this way.

April's comments prompted me to think more about my misplaced boldness, which would have laughed off at least some of these failings and feelings of inadequacy. I began looking at old travel photo albums, from my *Jahilyya*, and remembered the boy who spent years on his own, travelling the world. He would have laughed at my grad school apprehensions; he probably would have called me a Jackass (in the endearing sense of the word, of course) for fretting over such small things. Each album brought back little memories and sensations, reminding me of long lost moments abroad. I recalled his insecurities as a young traveller in his early twenties, I recalled his naivety too, but I remembered how he grew through each travel experience, always pushing beyond his limitations, in far off places like Egypt, Thailand, India, Costa Rica, Australia, Ethiopia, Brazil, Israel and others. I remembered his strength. And then a strange wave of forgotten passion hit me: I remembered my love for travelling and the reasons why I entered university in the first place.

The wave struck with the desire to realign myself with those reasons, and also with the realization that the fading tattoo, I see in the mirror, marked the boldness (to laugh) I fear is lacking within this era. It struck with irony, for that same boldness was the very thing I wished to efface and forget from the outset of the tattoo's removal. Staring in the mirror, the pallid tattoo speaks of the boy who led me to where I am today. Without his boldness I would have never travelled the world on my own, nor would I have ever entered university to eventually become the PhD student I am now. I am grateful for his efforts, even his fumbles, and more so than ever for his boldness, now that I see it under this light, and so, in erasing the tattoo it feels like I have reneged on this gratefulness, like I am betraying him, turning my back on him once and for all, despite all he has done, as the ink fades to nothing. This epiphany made me realize that the tattoo's dissolution felt like I was giving up on those aspects that I needed and ought to have in my life, and these feelings led me to another roadblock, for if I truly felt this way, how could I carry on erasing the tattoo?

The answer to this quandary came at the most unexpected time, in the middle of a date:

The lighting was dim and the loud music and chatter around us dulled our chances of hearing each other. She sat on the edge of her seat and leaned towards me, just to hear me, the candlelight illuminating the right side of her smile. "Tell me, do you have any crazy stories of your own?" she asked. I had only known her for four fifths of a pint and already I had been wondering if there would be a second date. But I had to pause that thought, realizing through the humdrum of sound that she had asked a question, one that I did not really want to respond to.

What kind of crazy stories do I have to tell as a grad student? My life is blander than oatmeal right now. Stories about grad life – the stress over a paper, a reading, a presentation – do not exactly attract prospective partners, so I opted out of wooing her with a tale of pity and searched for something else, when my chase in Bali and my deportation from Brazil sprung to mind. The stories were there mainly because I wrote about them in this paper, the day before. *Who knew this paper could help me in other affairs!* I chose the deportation, since the chase was too long and perhaps too scandalous for even a third date, let alone a first. My only problem with the deportation story was that it takes a particular finesse to make it humorous and worthwhile telling. And so, though the story and the skills to tell it were old and rusty I nevertheless pushed forward, bracing myself as I leaned in for the woo.

The story poured out of me like rotten milk – chunky, anything but smooth. *Oh Christ! This isn't going so well*. It lacked rhythm – all those pauses in the right spots for dramatic effect – and intensity – all

those vocal fluctuations in the right spots for plot progression and more dramatic effect. I used to be good at both. Several stutters and pauses (at all the wrong spots) later I realized that I started the story at the wrong moment, effectively killing any build up to the punch line at the end. And: *Wait, what the hell was the punch line?!* Then it dawned on me, her eyes glazed over in a fake smile, I needed to abort. I used the surrounding loudness to fade out the story and finished off my pint before sinking back into my chair. *You're fucking oatmeal – you Jackass!* Her glazed look changed to a puzzled one as I slunk back and began to chuckle, looking at the foam lines caked to the sides of my emptied pint, picturing the prospect of a second date drifting further and further away from the candlelight glow of our table.

The silver lining to this train wreck – the solution to my roadblock – came during my moment between the pint glass and me. It was the realization that I had just called myself a Jackass – that old term of endearment, which I had not used for some time, until now. She continued to stare, still puzzled, when I realized the young boy, so good at retelling those moments of humility, could not simply be invoked in those moments where I needed him to woo someone with a good story. He was gone and had been for some time now; asking him to reappear on a dime's notice was too much to ask. Yet those aspects of him I so cherished had somehow begun to resurface: the Jackass. Then I realized it: the tattoo may very well be a tombstone on my shoulder that commemorates the boy from my *Jahilyya*, but through its effacement, the shock it has stirred in me, and my reflections on this process, this boy has found new ink to live in – the ink that blackens these pages. The tattoo can fade now, for my connection to the boy has manifested, here, in this paper – a new memento, which stands in for his absence, just as the clothes, hanging in the tree, once stood for Waniol after his death. The boy is gone, but his memory lives on through these words, and these words are helping to reincorporate – unconsciously at first but now consciously – those once forgotten aspects back into my life. I called myself a jackass and laughed at a failure that day, perhaps I will (re)learn to laugh a little more in the failures to come, and perhaps one day I will be able to deliver those stories the way I used to. Perhaps I will be bolder – the way he was – in the time to come, and perhaps, I hope, this boldness will compliment the eyes that I have been sharpening, from my time in grad school. [8]

I looked up from my pint glass and over to my date, smiled and shook my head with closed eyes and pursed lips. *She'll never understand*. My story's wreckage still smolders, and the night appears to take a turn for the worse, but instead of waiting to hear the sounds of an interruption – the smoke grenade of a SWAT team, the shrapnel of a plane crash, the troops of an Alien brigade – I only hear my internal laughter and the voice in my head: *I wonder if one day this'll make a good story to tell?*

8 My silver lining was influenced by Susan Harding's (1987) work on religious conversion. She notes that the initial point of conversion occurs unconsciously when potential converts begin to adopt the language of the converters to make sense of the world around them. In my case it was the use of the term 'Jackass' that made me cognizant of a potential (re)conversion of another sort that may be in play within my own thinking. Furthermore, Gaston Gordillo's (2014) idea that destruction is a generative process led me to thinking about how new relationships can arise even in the face of apparent obliteration. This line of thinking helped me realize how this text became a new repository for my relationship to my younger self as I negotiated the tattoo's effacement.

References

Armstrong, Karen
2007 Muhammad: A Prophet For Our Time. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Benjamin, Walter
2007 Illuminations. New York: Schocken Books.

Gaston, Gordillo R.
2014 Rubble: The Afterlife of Destruction. Durham: Duke University Press.

Haraway, Donna
1988 Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. Feminist Studies. 14(3):575-599.

Harding, Susan
1987 Convicted by the Holy Spirit: The Rhetoric of Fundamentalist Baptist Conversion. American Ethnologist 14:167-181.

Kapoor, Subodh
2004 Inheritance – Al-kimiya. Volume 5, The Muslims: Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Dehli: Cosmo Publications.

Lohmann, Roger
2010 In The Company of Things Left Behind: Asabano Mementos. Anthropological Forum 20 (3):291-303.

Ries, Nancy
2002 Anthropology and the Everyday, From Comfort to Terror. New Literary History. 33(4): 25-742.

Rosaldo, Renato
1993 Imperialist Nostalgia. *In* Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Pp. 68-87. Beacon Press: Boston.

Stewart, Kathleen
2007 Ordinary Affects. Durham: Duke University Press.

Turner, Victor
1974 Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
1980 Social Dramas and Stories About Them. Critical Inquiry 7(1):141-168.

Tylor, Edward Burnet
2012 The Science of Culture. *In* Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History. 5th edition. Jon McGee and Richard Warms, eds. Pp. 30-45. New York: McGraw Hill.

New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Vol.9, No. 2 (April 2018) Pp.108-115

Book Review

THE RETURN OF COMRADE RICARDO FLORES MAGON

By Claudio Lomnitz. Zone Books, 2014

With great pleasure and with the natural bit of sadness that accompanies turning the last page of a good book, I have just finished reading Claudio Lomnitz' recent and thorough account of Ricardo Flores Magón's life and political journey.

Ricardo Flores Magón was one of the main liberal intellectual and political precursors of the 1910 Mexican Revolution. He represented a very important current of thought among those fighting for the still unfulfilled ideals of the Mexican liberal Constitution of 1857. This group created the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) that became a serious opposition and consequent threat to the Porfirio Díaz regime, in power since 1876. Having been won over by the anarchist ideas promoted in Europe by Kropotkin and Malatesta, in August 1900 the same group began to publish a very important anarchist newspaper, *Regeneración*. Approximately 3000 authors wrote for this paper, which survived with great difficulty for 18 years. Ricardo, his elder brother Jesús, and some others in his intellectual cohort were imprisoned in Mexico several times, and its publication was prohibited. They therefore decided to seek asylum in the United States in order to be able to publish *Regeneración* from there. Ricardo lived in the US from 1904[1] to 1922 as a political refugee. Despite living in exile, he became the main figure of the anarchist anti-Porfirista Mexican ideology, press and militancy, which managed to lead the important workers' strikes in both Cananea (State of Sonora, 1906) and in Río Blanco (State of Veracruz, 1908). During all those years he was persecuted in the US by both the Mexican and the American authorities, was in and out of prison constantly, and never again returned to Mexico. He died in jail in 1922.

Lomnitz sees the Mexican Revolution as "pure experience. It was its own sovereign; it was its own explanation" (p. xxvii). In it, *caudillo* leaders were much more important than ideologies or principles, for even if ideology was "the revolution's most cherished transcendental object," it was in fact "a constantly invoked absence" (p. xxvii). Lomnitz states clearly that he respects very much the history and the fight, one of the few currents that denounced

1 In early February 1904, Ricardo Flores Magón and three of his comrades – Rivera, Villarreal and Sarabia (see Lomnitz, reference 6) – arrived in Laredo, Texas, shortly after having been released from prison. They moved to San Antonio for a short while, brought back to life their newspaper *Regeneración*, then settled in Saint Louis Missouri where in 1906 they named themselves Junta Organizadora del Nuevo Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), declared they were trying to organize a revolution in Mexico, and were arrested for the first time in the US, in Los Angeles.

personalismo – the emphasis on personal power – since 1901, even before it became a political party. This party was fighting to "uphold the principles of the 1857 Constitution, and the *antipersonalista* idea had a great power among the PLM's main leaders and militants" (p. xxvii). For Lomnitz, PLM's liberalism was the first social movement to develop a coherent revolutionary ideology and program in the Mexican 20th century´s political history, an assertion which does not necessarily contradict the "bold point" made by Mexican revolution's important historian Alan Knight "concerning the PLM's marginality, even with respect to political life late in the Porfirian era … [and the fact] that it ceased to be a major political actor in Mexico as far back to 1908" (p. xxiv[2]). Lomnitz further explains why he chose Ricardo Flores Magón as "a leitmotiv in this story." Even though the "emphasis on a selfless attachment to [this movement's ideal] created room for a personality cult, and Ricardo is [who] best articulates the biography of the larger network with which the book is concerned," he was "the purest living example of uncompromising commitment to the ideal" (p. xxix). The way in which Lomnitz follows Magón in these pages and tries to "bring perspective to his strange story" is by seeking "to understand the collective that made him what he became," by seeking out Magón's "friends, kin and rivals," as a way to see him "through [his] relationships" (p. xl).

I believe that *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* also shows a great respect for many of those who preceded the author in studying this important political and ideological strand of Mexican revolutionary leadership. In effect, much has been written in Mexico and elsewhere, at least during the last fifty years, about the life of Magón and his fellow fighters, their ideas, their political party and their newspaper. Many of these writings about those who came to be known as the "*magonistas*" show to what extent they – and especially Ricardo Flores Magón – have remained a part of the memory of Mexican progressive intellectuals and political movements as "the purest living example of uncompromising commitment to" (p. xxix) the true revolutionary ideal of the Mexican masses. I also believe that this book makes an important contribution to the long-lasting collective effort to know and understand Ricardo Flores Magón because it sheds on him a renewed, non-dogmatic, non-apologetic, non-religious light. This perspective is based on serious and responsible research that was conducted mainly in Mexico and the United States, using archival documents, periodicals and secondary sources. I believe that the book was built upon a "Life and Times" biographical methodological approach.[3] The author consulted key sources in several US archives that, to my knowledge, had not been consulted before in regards to Magón.[4] From my point of view, the newly-consulted sources and the methodology he employs in reading and interpreting them allow Lomnitz to dialogue with his subject in a unique way, marked by his already known and welcome critical eye.

On one hand, Lomnitz tries to understand the very original intellectual and politically radical figure that Magón was, for example, regarding:

- His unquestionable status as a well-read and knowledgeable intellectual, and as a good writer and journalist.
- His mistrust of Mexican president Francisco Madero whom he criticized for not being a revolutionary enough democrat and for being too attached to the electoral agenda.
- His irreducible animosity towards Pancho Villa whom he always considered a bandit even when, side by side with Zapata, he fought Carranza.
- His very early criticism of Lenin's and Trotsky's "turn towards dictatorship" (p. 482), and what he called "Marxist oppression in Russia." Magón wrote: "'Tyranny cannot but breed tyranny … sooner or later Marxian intoxication will fade away, and the sobered minds will adopt the Ideal that in their darkness they scoffed at" (p. 483),[5]

2 Lomnitz refers to Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, vol.1, p.102, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

3 The author does not state it in these terms.

4 For example, among others, the United States Senate´s Committee of Foreign Relations' archives (see note 20 in the Introduction) or the McNeil Island Penitentiary, Inmate Case Files 1899-1920, belonging to the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons' archives, that can be found in the National Archives (see Note 14, Chapter 3).

5 Lomnitz is quoting "Ricardo Magón to Ellen White, February 22, 1921," in *Obras Completas*, vol. 1, *Correspondencia* (1899-1918), Ed. Jacinto Barrera Bassols, Mexico City, Dirección General de Publicaciones de CONACULTA, 2001, p. 118.

while at the same time condemning "the allied invasions of Russia" and calling for "strategic alliances with Marxist in Europe" (p. 483).[6]

- The way that the "dread of fragmentation and treason to the anti-*personalista* idea became for him (and his comrades) such a form of 'vertigo'" (p. 394) that it sometimes led him to bluntly accuse those they had considered comrades to have become traitors when they changed their points of view and did not agree with him anymore or not in every way.
- His stubborn and absolute belief, which never changed, that the harsher the suffering of the masses as a result of the savagery of capitalism – for example the slavery of Indigenous populations in the Yucatán – the more radical and the more successful their rebellion would be and the more they would achieve freedom from oppression. This was a belief that made Magón and the PLM bet, mistakenly enough, on the imminent beginning of a triumphal revolution in Mexico, during at least two important political junctures: in 1906, after the Cananea copper miners' strike was drowned in blood, and in 1908 (one year after the similarly harsh repression of the Río Blanco textile workers' strike) when Díaz declared to the American journalist James Creelman that he would leave power immediately before the 1910 presidential elections.

On the other hand, *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* also constitutes a dialogue with Magón the man:

- As a member of the very important 1892 generation, who developed his political conscience when Diaz consolidated himself in power, the social implications of this regime hardened, and the "*Científicos*" started to dominate as the regime's political clique, representing the technocratic and financial elites. In this moment, a group of students arose in a movement against re-election. They had very different ideas and plans for the country, and that is why they hit a glass ceiling, because they started to become important opposition thinkers.
- As a male born in the second half of the 19th century in the province of Oaxaca but who adopted and was adopted by the capital city during the anti-Díaz government turmoil. He belonged to a family with an interesting story that occupies some important pages in this book. In them, the author analyses why and how the family story that Enrique, Ricardo's youngest brother, wrote for posterity,[7] endeavoured to feed the myth of the Magons' being absolutely pure, clean and radically ethical revolutionaries, by lying about two important aspects: first, by presenting his father as an Indigenous man, something that led the reader to believe that their ancestors were very poor and came from one of Mexico's Indigenous populations ; and secondly, by hiding the fact that not only were the three Magón brothers the children of unmarried parents, but also that they had four siblings born to both their parents' first and only legal marriages.
- As a son, a brother, a husband, a father; as a lover of culture and beauty; as an exile for whom the English language was always difficult.
- As a strict moralist in his personal life. This had very positive aspects such as the fact that he was absolutely honest about ideas, money or marital duties. However, it also had some negative ones. For example, his severe judgment of homosexuals (something which was still common among many of the leftists of his time), even if they were his comrades, or his implacable judgement of any deviation from what he considered to be the only and true revolutionary path, and that he too easily punished with the accusation of treason
- As an extremely honest and consequential human being who was capable of all the possible sacrifices for his cause. These included exile, repression, prison, poverty, and never giving priority to his fragile and deteriorating health. At the same time, he always decided in favour of those voices who advised him that because he was such an important leader, he should not risk his life by going back to Mexico during the revolutionary war.

6 "Ricardo Magón to Ellen White, September 19, 1921," in *Obras Completas* 1:263.

7 Ricardo and Enrique, after many years of comradeship and love, separated in 1917 in a harsh and irreconcilable way that this book describes and analyzes. Enrique, liberated from prison in 1919, went back to Mexico in 1923, and lived there until his death in 1954.

Several good historians – including Josefina MacGregor and Eduardo Blanquel, among others – had already analysed the alliance between the different Mexican[8] and American governments of that period, directed at silencing the Magón brothers and their Mexican comrades,[9] by incessantly persecuting and imprisoning them and by shutting down *Regeneración* time after time. Lomnitz' book also looks inside this crucial aspect of Magón's exile in the US, but does so by also exploring the US archival material that I mentioned before. This allows *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* to explain very clearly, not only to the Mexican readers but also to American and other ones, how the governments of the United States of America and of some of the states where Ricardo lived – mainly Texas, California and Arizona – understood very clearly, especially after 1907, that it was not wise to accuse, persecute and condemn the exiled "Magonista" anarchists for trying to change things in Mexico through revolution. The book also explains that the reason behind this understanding was not only that these men were not breaking any US laws. It was also rooted in the fact that a portion of American citizens, especially in the southern states that were in close contact with Mexico, was sympathetic to many of this revolution's goals. They knew to what extent a large part of Mexicans suffered from too much poverty and injustice, and they believed that they had the right, as had had the Americans before, to fight for equality.[10] So American authorities found a better and more efficient path towards persecuting these men that the American public would not question: to accuse them of violating one American law, the neutrality law that allowed the US to condemn whoever organized movements inside the country that would partly imply the entanglement of the United States in foreign conflicts. Then, in 1918 they invented different ways of persecuting Magón. First they accused *Regeneración* of publishing "obscene" material, an accusation that they were using against socialist and anarchist American publications that were against the US engaging in WWI. Then, they managed to condemn him to 18 years in prison by accusing him of "violating the Espionage Act for a manifesto that he published … in the final issue of *Regeneración*, … on March 16, 1918" (p. 445). This manifesto included "a brief declaration trumpeting the coming of world revolution … [and] argued for workers' strikes against the war … with no regard for patriotic interests" (p. 445). This condemnation presented Magón as an undesirable exile who dared to attack the Americans' justified and correct nationalist feelings.

From page 429 to page 435, Lomnitz explicitly develops a subject that has been the focus of some of his other works on Mexico and that is in fact present in large parts of this book: racism against Mexicans in the United States. When the "Texas martyrs affair" exploded in the US, Magón wrote:

> Who among you has not received an insult in this country for the mere fact of being Mexican? Who has not heard tell of all the crimes that are committed daily against the people of our race? Do you know that in the South Mexicans are not allowed to sit in the same table as Americans in restaurants? … Don't you know that American jails are full of Mexicans? [p.432]

Finally I believe that Lomnitz' book is innovative in its treatment of an important aspect of Magón's personal and political life in the United States which he carefully explores and develops, and which, seen from this close perspective, is not familiar to the Mexican reader. This aspect is the "American Cause," a small but very committed and loyal group of American radical men and women that joined Magón and his "expat" Mexican comrades, supporting them unconditionally for several years – from 1907 to 1915 – in the cause of fighting for the Mexican Revolution in accordance with Magón's views of it.

Apart from the fact of this group of radicals being an important part of the Magón story in the US, for this book Lomnitz went about what he calls

8 Díaz, Madero, Huerta, Carranza (and during his presidency Calles as the governor of the state of Sonora), De la Huerta and Obregón.

9 Librado and Concha Rivera; Antonio I Villarreal and his two sisters, Juan and Manuel Sarabia; Anselmo Figueroa, Práxedis Guerrero; Antonio de P. Araujo, William C. Owen; Blas Lara; Jesús M. Rangel, Francisco Manrique and Lázaro Gutiérrez de Lara.

10 Lomnitz studied, through several papers published in US academic journals, the deep differences existing in those years between the life and the economic conditions of American and Mexican workers (see Note 3, Chapter 8).

a true "reading pilgrimage" (p. xl) of "these women and men's writings and letters." He engaged in this pilgrimage, explains the author, not because they were considered to be important intellectual figures in the United States, but because of three aspects that refer to important concerns of his on Mexico, Latin America, the United States and the world:

- The first aspect lies in the reason why Lomnitz wrote this book: "Exile and return, ideological purity and pragmatic accommodation, *personalismo* and its principal refusal, the three antipodes that shape [it] … have also been at the heart of my relationship with Mexico and with Latin America" (p. xxxv). And, he reveals to the reader that, in a similar but different way as that of Magón, "I have always been an exile – mine has been the exile of a Jew, haunted by a long-foretold Jerusalem that I have never actually known (p. xi).[11] And "although I have loved Mexico as much as anyone, I have aspired only to be known there, to return and be among friends, to teach and write and participate in public life" (p. xi), "there has never been a proper return. The scars of exile linger, even for those who do go back" (p. xii).[12]
- The second aspect is that he "was touched by the characters who shaped the "Mexican Cause," because they fought "*personalismo* and the cult of the state" that keep coming back in these lands, and they did so by "daring to explore a third alternative … cooperativist, not *personalista*; internationalist, and deeply critical of the state" (p. xxxv).
- The third aspect is that "they proved an "existential openness, beyond nationalism, [that] is timely, shakes the foundations of a North American order that is blighted by lack of imagination for a collective future of cooperation and mutual aid" (p. xl), and partly because they tried to serve both the Mexican revolution and translate the Mexican revolutionaries' social and political demands to the majorities in both countries.

"The American cause" members were all college educated and half of them came from well-to-do families. For the Mexican public, there is no doubt that the most famous of them is the writer John Kenneth Turner who, after meeting the Mexican expatriates, went on a several-years journey to the Yucatán that Lomnitz describes. He disguised as an American entrepreneur interested in investing in the sisal plantations. That is how he managed to dig up so many first hand testimonies about a phenomenon that had been illegal in Mexico for almost 90 years already and about which nothing had been published up to then: the slavery conditions in the Yucatán, – also a product of racism in Mexico – in which worked, the local Mayan populations and the Yaqui Indigenous rebels and their families that had been deported there, far away from their home state as a punishment. The result of his research gave birth to Turner's later famous book *Barbarous Mexico,* published in Mexico only in 1955, despite the still existing strong resistance from many, writes Lomnitz, even from the great historian Daniel Cosío Villegas.

Other important figures included John Kenneth Turner's first wife, the writer Ethel Duffy Turner; the suffragette and union leader Frances Noel and her husband P.D. Noel, who was a socialist activist and a businessman; the socialist lawyer and politician Job Harriman; the union activist and journalist John Murray, who was the editor of the SP organ *Common Sense*; and the rich Radcliffe graduate Elizabeth Trownbridge.

John Murray, from a very wealthy and famous Manhattan family that was active in the Underground Railroad that brought runaway slaves into the North, was moved by the writings of Tolstoy. This led to him renouncing his inheritance and taking up the cause

11 Claudio Lomnitz was born in Chile to a French mother and a Chilean father, both academics and Jewish. The family arrived in Mexico in the seventies. Lomnitz received his undergraduate degree in Anthropology from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. In 1987 he obtained his Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University. He lived in Chicago for many years, teaching History at the University of Chicago, serving at different points in time as the co-director of the University of Chicago's Mexican Studies Program (with Friedrich Katz), and as the Director of the University of Chicago's Latin American Studies Program. He moved to New York in 2005. He first taught at the New School University, where he was a Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology, the Chair of the Committee on Historical Studies, and the editor of the academic journal *Public Culture*. In 2006 he was hired by the Columbia University, where he has been the Director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, and the Campbell Family Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, an appointment that he holds up to now. He has published many books and articles (see http://anthropology.columbia.edu/people/profile/368).

12 Lomnitz travels often to Mexico to teach, give lectures and conduct research.

of the Socialist Party (SP) in which he was already active in 1901; he also fought for the fusion between the party and the union movement. He remained a union man until his suicide in 1921. In 1903 he began working with the Mexican unions; in 1906 he supported the Cananea strike in Sonora. Significantly, "labour organizing was critical to supporting the integration of Mexicans into unions in the US" (p. 28). In 1907 Murray supported Harriman's decision to legally defend the Mexican liberal prisoners, whose organization was the only one to have a pro-labour program in Mexico, where unionizing was at the time prohibited. On 1898 Harriman made a run for office as the governor of California and, in 1900, he had been Eugene Debs' running mate for the vice presidency of the US. This decision was extremely controversial even within the Socialist Party that was racist, anti-Chinese, and anti-Mexican. On the other hand, some of the organizations that it supported were not radical but reformist, and Magón was an anarchist.

Trownbridge was also an easterner from a wealthy family, who had studied English in Radcliffe, Harvard, where there were some radicals, like John Reed for example. She joined the Socialist Party at the age of eighteen, and moved to Los Angeles in 1908 because her health was poor. There, she met the Noels and lived in their house for some time. When she met the Mexican prisoners she was powerfully drawn to their cause, especially because she heard that they had been detained in the US by private Furlong detectives working for the Mexican government and thus violating US civil rights. She invested all her money in this cause, becoming its biggest donor for some years. For her, there was a connection between the fight against slavery in Mexico and the struggle for female suffrage in the US. Trownbridge and all her fellow Americans that supported the Magonistas belonged also to an ideological current called "Nationalism" that was quite strong in the Socialist Party, and that had points in common with Russian populism. Its motto was "production for use, not for profit," which shows us to what extent it was a communitarian current that had ties also with Kropotkin's cooperativist thought and project that, in turn, had points in common with the PLM's ideology (p. 34). Even if, writes Lomnitz, Mexico was a country they did not know well and Spanish a language that they did not speak, "there were aspects of the Mexican situation that were disturbingly familiar to members of The Mexican Cause" (p. 26). For these US radicals, political circumstances in Russia and Mexico in 1905 had many points in common, mainly regarding both their autocratic governments which violently repressed peasants' and workers' movements. *Regeneración* also frequently compared the Czar and Díaz. Finally, the main cause for these US citizens' support for Magón and his fellow thinkers was that Mexico was a US neighbour, and that the Díaz regime was supported by American capital, something which explained why Mexican dissidents exiled in the US were persecuted by the US authorities (p. 35).

In 1908 these American liberals reunited around the public defence they had organized of the Mexican PLM activists who were persecuted, jailed, and deported. In February Turner, Harriman and Murray met in prison with Magón and his three Mexican ideological brothers, and they were deeply moved by their intellectual and political profile, their ambitious political program for Mexico and their valiant history of opposition to Díaz, whom they considered to be a harsh Mexican dictator. This encounter led them to create a circle of US supporters of these Mexicans that they saw as "role models," a support that was fundamental in their new life and struggle in their land of exile.

I must confess that during the last decade I had not seriously read anything on Ricardo Flores Magón and his fellow fighters, something that I did very often when I was a social science student and also when I researched the story of the leftist opposition to Stalinist communism and to *lombardismo* in the thirties in Mexico. I suppose that, during both these periods, I must have joined the mainstream of progressive thought about Ricardo Flores Magón as representing the essence of what true revolutionaries should be. As the more mature and ideologically independent and critical human being that I hope to have become, reading *The Return of Comrade Ricardo Flores Magón* projected me in mainly two different although not necessarily opposite directions that I detail in what remains of this review.

The first direction has recalled the sadness that I often feel when revisiting the history of many of the currents of the left in the first half of the 20th century. This feeling develops from observing, for example, how a rigid interpretation of communist ideology led some leaders to form bureaucratized governments, thus losing their *raison d'être* and their path, and contributing to some terrible blood baths, whose victims were too often leftists. Others on the left were so strongly attached to their ideological principles that these became straitjackets which too often did not allow them to see reality as it truly was. Lomnitz' book shows us how some of Magón's and his comrades' important political mistakes can be explained by their extremely optimistic and/or rigid revolutionary ideology. It happened in 1906 and in 1908 when their optimism was so misplaced that it had major consequences for their freedom and for the already difficult conditions of the workers that supported them. It happened when they despised Madero´s correct way of reading the importance that the electoral moment had for the revolution, so not only did they not support him when they still had a strong influence especially in the north, but they fought him. It also happened in 1915 when Magón decided that his American friends from the Mexican cause had simply become traitors because they were reading the political situation in Mexico in a very different way than he was, something which led them to search for alliances in several of the revolutionary camps (see p. 429).

I think that this ideology – in a certain way very close to the basis of the Judeo-Christian philosophy – also had to do with the cult of suffering that Magón practiced in his own life, as if it were in concert with his revolutionary ethics. Lomnitz shows us how William Owen[13] reacted in a very different way from Magón when in 1916 he received the news of his imminent detention: he left California and fled to England. From there he continued to publish and to send the English-language page of *Regeneración* by post. In it, he explained to his readers his reasons for escaping:

> First: I have no love for the martyrdom of prison. … Secondly: I am opposed, on principle, to surrender. We should fight. We should not surrender. … Fourthly: outside the jail I can write. Inside I cannot. [Owen quoted at p. 455-56]

From Lomnitz' book I sensed that the same difference between Magón and Owen towards the cult of martyrdom – a cult that many leftists also regarded as inherent to their ideology and purposes – was also central in their different views of whether to go or not to go back to Mexico in 1913. Shortly after Magón's death, Owen wrote to a comrade of theirs saying that he had always questioned the reasons why they had not all moved back to Mexico at that time, maybe after Madero's assassination. According to him, that would have been much better not only in the sense that they could have actively participated in the Revolution, but also in the sense that participating would have raised their morale and their spirits, and would have been more aligned with their ideals. Some argued that Magón did not go back because of cowardice. Others, like Owen himself, argued that it had been Magón's wife, María Brousse, who, in fear of losing him, had always convinced him not to go back (p. xxiii). And that had proved not to be too difficult for her, because Magón himself strongly believed that his pen and his being at the helm of *Regeneración* from exile should never be put in jeopardy, for they were much more useful to the revolution than wielding a gun in his country, something which hundreds were already doing back there.

Magón died in prison sick and lonely when he was only 49 years old. The prison's medical service deliberately did not attend to his health problems and needs. He had lost many of his old friends and *compagnons de route*. Following personal-political-economic issues around *Regeneración's* administration and survival, as well as family conflicts, he and Enrique had so drifted apart that, while being in the same prison for several months, they did not see each other or talk. Ricardo finally returned to Mexico but only after his death, and he was buried in the Panteón Francés in Mexico City. Despite *Regeneración's* undoubted prestige in the memory of many Mexicans, its last number was published in

13 Owen was the British exiled "editor of the English-language page of *Regeneración* and one of the leading lights of the groups' inner circle" (p. xxiii). Of course Magón could not have fled to England, but could he have fled to Mexico to escape prison?

1918, and it did not manage to make any important difference in the paths that the Revolution followed at least from 1913 on.

Despite this line of thinking, the second direction this book has led me in has nevertheless renewed the fundamental respect that I used to have, and that Lomnitz has, towards the intellectual and political honesty of these men and women whom we remember as the Magonistas – even if Magón rejected the term for its *personalista* and *caudillista* nature. This type of honesty is almost impossible to find in Mexican politics, and not only in Mexican politics. It also allowed me to refresh my understanding of the important political stories of many of these idealist liberal-anarchist men and women of the first decades of the Mexican revolutionary history – like Práxedis Guerrero or Francisco Manrique – whose memory we should not allow to be drowned in today's cold scepticism.

Olivia Gall
Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinaria en Ciencias y Humanidades
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México