

2015 VOLUME 2

A watercolor illustration of a human face, rendered in shades of pink, purple, and blue. The face is drawn on a background of light blue horizontal lines, suggesting lined paper. The drawing includes anatomical details such as the eye, nose, mouth, and ear, with some parts highlighted in red and marked with small green dots. The overall style is soft and artistic.

CONTINGENT HORIZONS

The York University Student Journal of Anthropology

Tracing her scars with her fingertips she told me her story.

In that moment of trust, my astonishment gave way
to compassion, acceptance, courage, and love.

We saw ourselves in each other and that connection
became a powerful space for growth and change.

Christabel Homewood (2015)

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ABOUT *CONTINGENT HORIZONS*

Contingent Horizons is an annual open-access student journal whose editorial board is a collective composed solely of students. It aims to provide a platform for students of anthropology seeking to publish their outstanding scholarly work in a peer-reviewed academic forum.

Contingent Horizons is guided by an ethos of social justice, which informs its functioning, structure, and policies. It seeks to expand anthropological discussions by publishing students' work and remaining open to a variety of alternative formats.

Contingent Horizons' website is the keystone of the journal. Not only does it host published articles, but it also offers a safe space for respectful discussions that extend the life of scholarly materials and debates beyond publication.

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Our collective grew this year with new members: Kathe Gray, Janita Van Dyk, Dayna Jeffrey, and Eric Ryken, who was able to contribute to the journal during the fall term. This was a welcomed challenge which pushed us to re-think how the journal would take shape and opened our minds to considering new ways of conceptualizing anthropology and collectivity.

We would like to thank Professor Othon Alexandrakis, our faculty advisor, for his continued guidance for the vision and preparation of the journal. We are also grateful to Albert Schrauwers, the chair of York University's anthropology department, for his tireless support. The anthropology department and its members have also continued to be the backbone of this project—we thank you all.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have received over 35 submissions this year, twice as many as last year, from undergraduate and graduate students from universities across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom—you continue to inspire us with your creativity, courage, and craft.

To our peer reviewers who have been an integral part of this journal, thank you for your dedication and hard work, whether it be facing the uncertainties of labor disruptions at York University or the vagaries of electronic communication across the world.

Contingent Horizons will return next year. The editorial collective will continue to seek submissions that challenge and enrich our expectations of what anthropological inquiry can be, whether through original and unexpected theoretical constructs, innovative methodological approaches, collaborative approaches to research and writing, or alternative forms of presenting ethnography in word, image, and sound.

We hope to have your voices and inquisitive minds join us on this journey.

CONTINGENT HORIZONS 2016

If you are interested in being part of next year's edition of *Contingent Horizons* please stay tuned for our next call for papers in October 2015.

We hope to receive yet more submissions that will push the limits of the discipline towards new and ever-expanding horizons.

We will also be seeking peer reviewers whose knowledge and expertise can help advance the strength of the papers we publish.

Please visit www.contingenthorizons.com for more information.

Athens In Play

The artist, gallery, and spectator in crisis

ELINA LEX

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, YORK UNIVERSITY

This paper explores the significance of experimental art spaces in the context of the political and socioeconomic crisis in Athens, Greece. Through ethnographic research, the aim is to examine where these galleries are situated in the socioeconomic moment but also, more significantly, how engaging in them can play an important role to a culture under crisis. By examining “play” through the disciplines of games, participatory, and interactive art, I address the social function of play and how it occupies a meaningful place in one’s social life despite being a separate mode of experiencing the world. Specifically, this paper investigates how the act of being “caught up” in play facilitates social connection, meaning, relief, stimulation, and agency in times of crisis.

KEY WORDS experimental, gallery, games, participatory art, play

Prologue

The room is masked in a muggy darkness, a stark contrast to the sweltering Athens sun beaming just outside. An art installation of mannequins draped in light and sturdy fabrics dangle from the ceiling and hover around the room. Three men sit around the long wooden table, their backs hunch over their game of chess, closing off any remnants of the outside world. Their eyes gaze down intensely at their pieces. The engineer, a blonde haired light-eyed man, upon seeing his next move, slams his bishop down fervently on the board. His opponent, the mathematician, a dark featured man, answers with equal confidence, slamming the board powerfully with his rook. This continues on for minutes, their movements becoming a blur, making it difficult to comprehend the fate of the game. A third man, a white haired retired sailor sits close by watching every move intently. Every once in a while, he sticks his hand in, arguing in Greek what the next smart move would be. When the game ends, they start again. It is a performance, a certain claim of power. There appears to be something more than just the game they are trying to win. The sailor looks over at me and nods in greeting. He asks me where I’m from and I tell him I’m a student from Canada doing research in Athens for the month. He welcomes me with a smile:

“Welcome to the Kingdom of Corruption.”



The crisis

In 2008, soaring consumer debt and the ensuing “December events” that proliferated from the murder of 15-year-old Grigopoulos by a policeman marked a negative turning point for the city of Athens (Placas 2011). With current social and economic tensions rapidly intensifying in 2010, neoliberal reformations caused the population to experience sudden economic and social impoverishment and insecurity (Placas 2011). In exchange for economic aid from the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, salaries and pensions were reduced as taxes and layoffs increased (Dalakoglou 2011:36). With personal and family incomes lost, citizens were now becoming rapidly impoverished as they faced drastic forms of social and economic insecurity. As a result, the country experienced major shifts in its national political landscape, and the occupation of foreign technocrats affected Greece’s capacity to self-determine (Dalakoglou 2011:36). Emerging out of this moment of social, political, and economic uncertainty, Athens has seen a surge of anti-establishment organizations, protest movements, and creative responses to negotiate forms of social and civil subjectivity and selfhood.

The goal of this paper is to investigate creative responses, namely the growing significance that experimental art spaces play within the context of neoliberal reformation and the socioeconomic crisis. The aim of my research is to examine not only where these spaces fit within this specific socioeconomic moment but also the kinds of social functions engaging in them can facilitate. Specifically, I look at how being “caught up” in the play of these experimental art spaces can facilitate social connection, meaning, relief, stimulation, and function as a site of agency in negotiating one’s own subjectivity. With the concept of

“play” central to my argument, I will explore how “play” touches many interdisciplinary debates from the practice of play in games, to participatory art, and to the very grounds of experimentality itself. In examining this question, I hope to address the role that art and entertainment play in a society under a political, economic, and social crisis of identity.

In play

In his classic discussion of play in human culture, Johan Huizinga defines play as:

A voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, have its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is ‘different’ from ‘ordinary life.’” [Huizinga 1950:28]

Play is a world within a world, as Huizinga says, “‘different’ from ‘ordinary life.’” People, it turns out, not only have the ability to occupy their immediate physical realities, but they can also “place themselves in imagined worlds and take on alternative roles in those worlds that may be very different from the role they play in ‘real life’” (Stromberg 2009:vii). When we become absorbed in an entertainment activity, whether it is a television show, a film, a performance, a game, or a piece of art, we temporarily allow ourselves to lose track of the day-to-day world in order to immerse ourselves more fully into the world of play (Stromberg 2009:13). This process of being “betwixt and between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states” is what Victor Turner describes as “liminality (1977:465). In his exploration of rituals, Turner defines liminality” as the process in which a person is stripped and separated from their previous status, role, and political/social order. Once separated, they enter the transitional state of “liminality,” a threshold between their previous pre-ritual and new post-ritual identity (Turner 1977:471).

More recently, “liminal” symbolism has been applied to other parts of the cultural realm such as the study of entertainment, performance, and play. Play can be interpreted as a form of “liminality” in which the structures of everyday social order are suspended. However, even the ambiguous “liminal” state of play operates under its own rules of time and place, presenting its own collective symbols and view of the world. Being “caught up” in play “is very similar to becoming deeply immersed in a compelling social interaction” (Stromberg 2009:14). It is within this unclassified, transitional, separated state of “liminality” that significant symbols, values, and solidarities are forged. Being transfixed by symbolism has the power to redirect thought, feeling, and action and thus “in strong experiences of becoming caught up, we may feel that our environment and even ourselves have been utterly transformed” (Stromberg 2009:14). Therefore, it is within these spaces that transformation can potentially occur.

Huizinga argues that “in play, there is something ‘at play’ which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning into action. All play means something” (1950:1). Through observing play in action, my aim is to understand the social and cultural meanings of play in everyday life. By analyzing play beyond its own confines, I argue that play serves something which is not play itself and it is in fact extremely relevant to one’s social life (Huizinga 1950:2). This conceptualization maintains that

play is a present mode of human experience and engagement in the world, rather than a distinct activity (Malaby 2007:101).

Design of ethnography

My goal in the design of this ethnography is to emulate the experience of negotiating between realms of reality/fantasy, everyday/play. The ethnography alternates between two different tones of narrative. Sections of autoethnographic accounts with a story-like prose are designed to immerse the reader in the sensation of being “caught up” in a narrative or anecdote. Inspired by Clifford Geertz’s “Thick Description” (1973), these micro ethnographic descriptions are meant to illuminate a larger picture of a broader cultural context. I have offset these narratives with analytic reflections that expand these micro moments in a reflective voice grounded in the “everyday.” When reading, the reader is thus situated “in betwixt and between” these two types of narratives (Turner 1977:465). By situating the reader at this threshold, the aim is for them to experience this continuous shift between absorption and detachment, play and everyday, and in turn, reflexively and actively engage with the phenomena I am exploring within my research.

Methods

Fieldwork for this paper was conducted in July 2014 in Athens, Greece as part of a research methods course held at York University, Toronto. During my stay in Athens I conducted three interviews with artist-curators and several other informal conversations with locals engaging in the alternative entertainment spaces along with me. I visited five experimental art spaces, some numerous times: Booze Cooperativa, Taf (The Art Foundation), Art Wall, the Onassis Cultural Center, and The National Museum of Contemporary Art, and additionally participating in the games and works of interactive art being held at these spaces.

Structured observation was a significant method of my research. By clearly laying out plans for observation, I was able to look selectively at social phenomena continuously across different field sites. Structured observation was not only used to decode how the physical topography of these spaces was imagined and organized but it was also valuable in observing and analyzing the human behaviour, performance, and interactions that occurred when people engaged in these spaces. These behaviours, performances, and interactions, namely the kinds of “play” activities and social engagements I encountered, are critical as they make certain social and political statements about the spaces themselves.

While observation methods were significant to my research, they only entailed a portion of my methodology. To expand these observations, active participation, involvement, and engagement in the social life of the experimental art community allowed me to situate myself within the cultural environment of the people I was researching. This method of participant observation, an interactive and engaged approach to observation, also established my role as a spectator and participator in the games and pieces of interactive art I engaged with. In this sense, engaging myself as a spectator has compelled the ethnography to embrace elements of autoethnography, a type of method involving self-observation and reflexivity where autobiographical, personal, inward, and

subjective experiences are connected to a broader cultural, social, and political picture (Ellingson and Ellis 2008:448). In the field, “while participating in interactive reflection with others, autoethnographers engage in embodied action, not just report on distant processes” (Ellingson and Ellis 2008:453). However, I must note this embodied action as a spectator was one of my major challenges. At times I found it relatively challenging to simultaneously engage and participate as a subjective spectator while balancing a detached objectivity. This notion of balance is a recurring theme in discussions of anthropological fieldwork.

To Hortense Powdermaker, balance between involvement/detachment, subjectivity/objectivity, art/science lies at the heart of participant observation, which in turn lies at the core of the discipline of anthropology (1966:286). To Ellingson and Ellis, autoethnography is a social constructivist method that problematizes these deep-rooted divisions of researcher–researched, objectivity–subjectivity, process–product, self–other, art–science, and personal–political (2008:450). Autoethnography interferes with these dichotomies, “drawing blurry lines between detached, external knowledge and personal, internal knowledge” (Ellingson and Ellis 2008:452). Autoethnographers weave their own lived experiences into their research accounts, resulting in a rich and complex understanding of the cultural environment in which they are working in. In her account of a geriatric oncology clinic, Ellingson writes “I do not study the patients and the staff of the clinic with detachment; my own experiences as a patient filter what I see, hear, and feel” (Ellingson and Ellis 2008:452).

Structured observation, participant observation, and autoethnographic methods were essential in gathering data. However, it was necessary that my own observations be elaborated, tested, corroborated, and expanded upon in order to develop a co-produced understanding with a local perspective. Engaging in these multiple experimental art sites before I began interviewing allowed me to gather a significant amount of data and questions so when I did have the chance to interview artists and curators within the community, I was able to elaborate on my findings on a deeper level. An opening event at the Art Wall gallery led me to meet and interview two of my informants, Filipa and Grigore.

Throughout my interviews I posed questions that concentrated on the evolving significance of experimental art spaces in the context of the crisis moment. As the interviewees were artist-curators working within the contemporary art community today, my questions focused on the effect of the crisis on the artist, the gallery, and the spectator. These interviews allowed my own observations and theories to be tested, elaborated, deconstructed, and in turn enabled their own local perspective to be conceptualized in a co-produced space. I would also like to note that many of the informal conversations I had with locals, whether or not they were engaging in the art spaces with me, were helpful in gaining insight into everyday perspectives on the crisis, entertainment, and Athenian life.

Furthermore, I would like to experiment with the concept of game playing as a research method. While playing a game of chess in Booze Cooperativa with a local Athenian man named Dionysus, I was engaging in a participant observation method, of participating in the immersion of the game while also maintaining a detached observation of the experience. As we played and he guided me through strategies, I was able to see the board through his eyes. Therefore, the chessboard was an object of connection and mediation,

facilitating, and mediating a new paradigm of relating to one another. The board became a common language, allowing us to communicate despite our language barrier. It became a co-produced mental space where knowledge could be shared from both sides. As the game continued, I could feel the comfort between us growing and I found it easier to ask him some questions. The chessboard was thus an object that deconstructed the classic power relations of the researcher-researched relationship. Instead, these typical power relations were reversed, with me negotiating the identity of the “student” and he the “teacher.” I must note, however, that this identity was different when I spoke with locals who were female, also students, and closer to my age. Therefore in the field, a certain flexibility of the self and an awareness of the interviewee are essential in conducting active reflexive interviews. Regardless, game playing can function as a social lubricant. Though I only spoke with Dionysus once, game playing can certainly serve as a site for initiating conversation where connection and a potential rapport with a local can be built.

Lastly, as a subset of participant observation methods, photography was a research tool I used in the field. Early stages of fieldwork usually entail the orientation of oneself in a new environment and culture. Photography can be a method of social orientation, offering “the stranger in the field a means of recording large areas . . . rapidly, and with great detail, and a means of storing away complex descriptions for future use” (Collier 1986:16). Even if the researcher in the field experiences phenomena they cannot yet fully recognize or understand, photography aids in capturing these moments of raw perception (Collier 1986). Photography allows us to revisit these vivid first impressions, inviting a space for future reflection, interpretation, decoding, and meaning-making. Through photographic documentation, it has enabled me to grasp patterns, moments of similarity and variation and as a result, it has allowed me to notice connections among the various art spaces across Athens.

As Collier argues, photography can go beyond documenting mere material items of a culture as it can detail

[h]uman functions, the quality of life, and the nature of psychological well-being. Photography can record not only the range of artifacts in a home but also their relationship to each other, their style of placement in space, all the aspects that define and express the way in which people use and order their space and possessions. [1986:45]

Photography thus operated as a subset of structured observation, aiding in the process of decoding the identity of spaces. By assembling a photographic inventory of the physical topography, aesthetics, organization, arrangement, activity, and use of space, photography guided me to build connections between these factors that combine to reflect a moral statement or narrative about the values of the group I was studying.

Recent discussions in anthropology and photography have debated whether expressive as opposed to realist documentary images might represent anthropological ideas that “fracture the positivist assumptions [of] realist ‘visual notebook’ approaches to ethnographic photography” (Da Silva and Pink 2004:158). Photography is inherently prone to subjective influences in perception and representation. What we see, through the lens or not, does not entail one ‘authentic,’ ‘objective,’ ‘real,’ ‘true,’ or ‘whole’ glance of reality. The fundamental

nature of photography relates directly to anthropological practice—in the field, we can only obtain partial truths and small slices of reality (Clifford 1986:5). With this in mind, I incorporated photography along with my autoethnographic accounts with the intention of breaking down positivist assumptions of ethnographic practice. As I discussed, photography can be a way to reckon with raw moments of perception. These “visual moments” reflect a “direct transmission of [subjective] experience . . .hurried, abbreviated, and urgent” (Taussig 2011:19). Apart from their informational and symbolic values, the “visual moment” of a photograph reflects a “lived experience,” an encounter with moments and intensities that often “erupt out of nowhere” (Taussig 2011:145). Photography alongside my autoethnographic prose illustrate these raw and auratic experiences “caught up” in the act of becoming, in process, in liminality, in feeling, in affect, bearing moments not yet named, grasped, and “thickened” into meaning (Massumi 2002:15).

The game

Sitting at the long stretch of wooden table again, the darkness of the room now mimics the night of the Athens street outside. It's almost midnight and I'm playing chess with some classmates. Not having played in many years, I am acutely aware of my experience of the game. As it progresses, the pressure of every move intensifies. I can feel myself being captivated and drawn into the world of the game, paralyzed by my next choice. The droning music draws me in deeper, fueling its intensity.



“There’s no escape,” the lyrics repeat.

With every move on the line, I grow an attachment to my remaining pieces, to the strategy and game that I constructed. I am somewhat aware of the man that walks up and down the table gazing down at the different chess games going on. He introduces himself as Dionysus. His hair is peppered grey and he wears a crisp white button shirt tucked into black slacks. As my classmates play a round, I watch him at the end of the table set up a board on his own, move pieces around and invent strategies. Every so often he takes a step back, takes a drag of his smoke, and gazes down at the board, visualizing it.

When he walks back over I ask him if he plays chess a lot. He says he has been playing the game for many years. He invites me to play a game with him. Sitting down with him, he tells me that he likes to come here –chess is very hard to find in Athens. As we play our first match, knowing I would undoubtedly lose, I tell him to point out to me any fatal flaws in my game. Unlike the players I saw the other day, there was something different about the way Dionysus played. Placing a piece down, he would rotate it in place in between his fingers, twisting it, as if he were fastening the piece onto the board—slowly but confidently. As he waits for his turn, he carefully rolls a cigarette in his fingers. Space and harmony are very important aspects of chess, he tells me. It’s important to not simply visualize the pieces of the board as objects but to see the energy of the board, how different parts relate to one another. I again feel myself being drawn into the world of the game. I somehow want to prove myself to him, that I can by some means apply the strategies he’s been teaching me. “If you make a mistake, don’t let it get to your head,” he says, “Move on and don’t be disappointed.” I wasn’t certain if he was speaking about chess anymore.

Can the way people engage in games tell us something about the nature of their everyday world? There is a therapeutic element to engaging in a game. In various attempts to define the biological function of play, play has been described as the “discharge of superabundant vital energy, of relaxing after exertion, of training for the demands of life, of compensating for unfulfilled longings” (Huizinga 1950:3). What is significant is that all definitions signal that play can also improve our immediate reality.

Yet at the same time play can also be the threshold into another kind of reality. We are drawn to play “because it is more suspenseful or exciting or rewarding than life in the day-to-day world” (Stromberg 2009:15). Those absorbed in a game can be so consumed by it to the point of forgetting their surroundings. Like being engrossed in a conversation, playing a sport, or watching a theatrical performance, when we engage in play we become caught up in a “socialized trance,” an imaginative sphere distinct from everyday life (Desjarlais 2011:14). This can entail a kind of ecstasy: “to be or stand outside oneself, a removal to elsewhere” (Desjarlais 2011:14).

Dionysus expressed that chess can be a very passionate engagement. Many competitive players work hard on their games, studying the game, practicing the game, sharpening their strategic vision (Desjarlais 2011:10). So why do people become so enraptured by certain activities such as chess? Chess can operate as a self-forming activity, or in Foucauldian terms, a “technology of the self” (Desjarlais 2011:10). Chess players employ a number of technologies of self and subjectivity, “some physical and social, others cognitive, emotive,

mnemonic ... The self becomes an abiding project toward mastery” (Desjarlais 2011:10). In the context of the socio-economic moment, this feature of game playing becomes even more significant. Game playing offers agency, emotional fulfillment, and stimulation out of the “boredom and powerlessness of socioeconomic order” of the everyday (Stromberg 2009:158). It becomes a site for people to negotiate their own subjectivities and generate new ways of “framing and modeling social reality which presses on them in their daily lives” (Turner 1977:486). Play is a way to “step out” of “common reality into a higher social order” (Huizinga 1950:13). This enactment of play can be therapeutic, on one level as an escape from the everyday, but also as the grounds for self-improvement inside of the everyday.

What draws Dionysus most to the game, however, is its social dimension. Often times, chess is “taken to be a semi-solitary activity, in which a person is alone with his thoughts for long stretches of time” (Desjarlais 2011:15). However, playing chess is also a deeply social affair. Surrounded by others who also find it a meaningful endeavor, “a sense of commodity often comes with playing chess at a neighbourhood club or tournament hall” (Desjarlais 2011:15). The chessboard is thus an object that is deeply rooted in the social. People interact with it to facilitate social connection. This search for social connection is fundamental to the human condition. Social activities like game-playing make possible an engagement in the world that allow us to feel like human beings, which becomes even more essential in times of crisis. Therefore, chess not only makes a social and political statement about the space itself, but it also signals to the desires of a broader socio-political moment. Here, play means something, extending into other arenas of life and serving something which is not merely play (Huizinga 1950:2).

In spite of being a separate mode of experiencing the world, play generates meaning that is extremely relevant to the immediate reality of one’s social life. Play can actually adorn life and amplify it, and to that extent, it becomes a necessity, a life function where its meaning, significance, expressive value, spiritual, and social associations contain a cultural function (Huizinga 1950:9). In Malaby’s study of gambling in Greece, games are perceived as inseparable from everyday life in which the unpredictabilities of games are understood as “mirrors for, as well as constitutive of, the uncertainties of their lives” (2007:98). Games have important consequences that manifest not only materially, but socially and culturally as well. Games can serve as models for other high-stake arenas of life: politics, business, health, and social relations (Malaby 2007:109). Even in non-gambling matches like chess, “status and relationships are on the table in place of hard currency” (Malaby 2007:98). As social relationships becomes central to grappling with the crisis moment, game playing is being embraced within these alternative art spaces as a way to satisfy a desire for social meaning and connection.

Participation

Weaving in and out of the tiny rooms, each unit invites a different experience — to sit, to watch, to touch, to draw. The decaying walls of the previous homestead-turned-experimental-art-space/café are covered in messages, drawings, and graffiti writings, adding to the vocabulary of the space. It is hard to tell whether they were put there before or after the conversion.



I walk into a bleached white room. Scattered sheets of paper are sprawled over a tabletop. A book lies open with a pen sitting next to it, inviting me to add to the string of other messages.

I see something hanging there against the far wall; it's sharp metal surface sticks out in all directions.

"Wear it." A sign next to it beckons me.

It's a glove with hundreds of nails attached to its surface.

I put it on, feeling the weight of it on my hand. The inside is not as sharp as the outside suggests, but it still feels rough against my skin. It doesn't fit perfectly and I think about the numerous other hands that might have tried it on.

The breakdown of medium-specific art and the conceptualization of installation art as an artistic practice in the 1960s opened up new ways of engaging the viewer in a work of art. During this decade, "the word 'installation' was employed by art magazines to describe the way in which the exhibition was arranged ... [giving rise] to the use of the word for works that used the whole space as 'installation art'" (Bishop 2005:6). Germano Celant's 1976 exhibition *Ambient/Arte* reconceptualized the "language" of an exhibition display, not merely as a "flat display of objects, but a picture book that tells a story in a certain place in time" (Casciani 2010). Inspired by the installations of the historical avant-garde of the 1910s to 1920s, Celant commissioned artists to interact with and incorporate interior

architecture and environments into their works of art (Casciani 2010). These theatrical, immersive, and experiential installations addressed the viewer as a physical presence in space, presupposing a viewer “whose sense of touch, smell, and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision” (Bishop 2005:6). This embodied interaction, inquiry, and participation are the very substance of installation art (Bishop 2005:24).

The 1990s saw a surge in increased artistic interest in spectator embodiment, participation, and collaboration (Bishop 2012:1). From Alfredo Jaar’s display of images taken by Caracas residents through disposable camera handouts in *Camera Lucida* (1996) to the socially interactive installation project of Echo Park’s *Construction Site* (2005), the increase of socially geared projects strived to “collapse the distinction between performer and audience, professional and amateur, production and reception, instead emphasizing collaboration and the collective dimension of social experience” (Bishop 2006:10). Activation, authorship, and community were the driving motivations behind the participatory impulse of art in the 1990s. As subjects of participation, the hope was that it would inspire a newfound ability to determine one’s own social and political reality. Furthermore, by deconstructing the hierarchal relationship of the artist and viewer, it was believed that collaborative creativity could produce a more positive and equal social model all around. (Bishop 2006:12). By breaking down this boundary between producer and consumer, participatory art also urged an involvement in the viewer, even an interventionist attitude, in the process of production. These works thus facilitated an active engagement of spectatorship rather than a passive one. (Bishop 2006:11).

Today, this attitude of active participation is widely being adopted in independent experimental art spaces across the city of Athens. As the social dimensions of both life and art become increasingly significant within the current crisis moment, intersubjectivity, interaction, and sociability are becoming dominant factors in the consideration of the boundaries between artist and viewer, producer and spectator. It is within these gallery spaces that these ideas are being translated, experimented with, and implemented. In breaking down and eliminating mediating objects such as glass cases and “do not touch” signs, these new modes of artistic production and reception openly invite a direct connection between the viewer and art object, satisfying the desire to touch, connect, and make real the narrative of the object.

Artists are also adopting a “laboratory tendency,” where work is open-ended, interactive, and resistant to closure, “often appearing to be ‘work in progress’ rather than a completed project” (Bishop 2004:52). Promoting an interventionist, do-it-yourself attitude, “laboratory tendency” entails a work of art that invites the viewer to actively participate on the level of production. The table installation inviting the viewer to sit and write a message is a fitting example of this. As viewers come and go, social connection is not only facilitated between artist and viewer, but between viewers as each interaction layers and interweaves one another, made visible in the form of messages. In this respect, the artwork is always in progress, open-ended, and evolving as more interactions accumulate.

I was also informed that technology and digital media has increasingly been incorporated to engage in themes of social connection. With technology producing new abilities to break down social or geographic boundaries, the integration of technology with art reflects a social need for communication and “instant” connection (Vogiatzaki-Krukowski

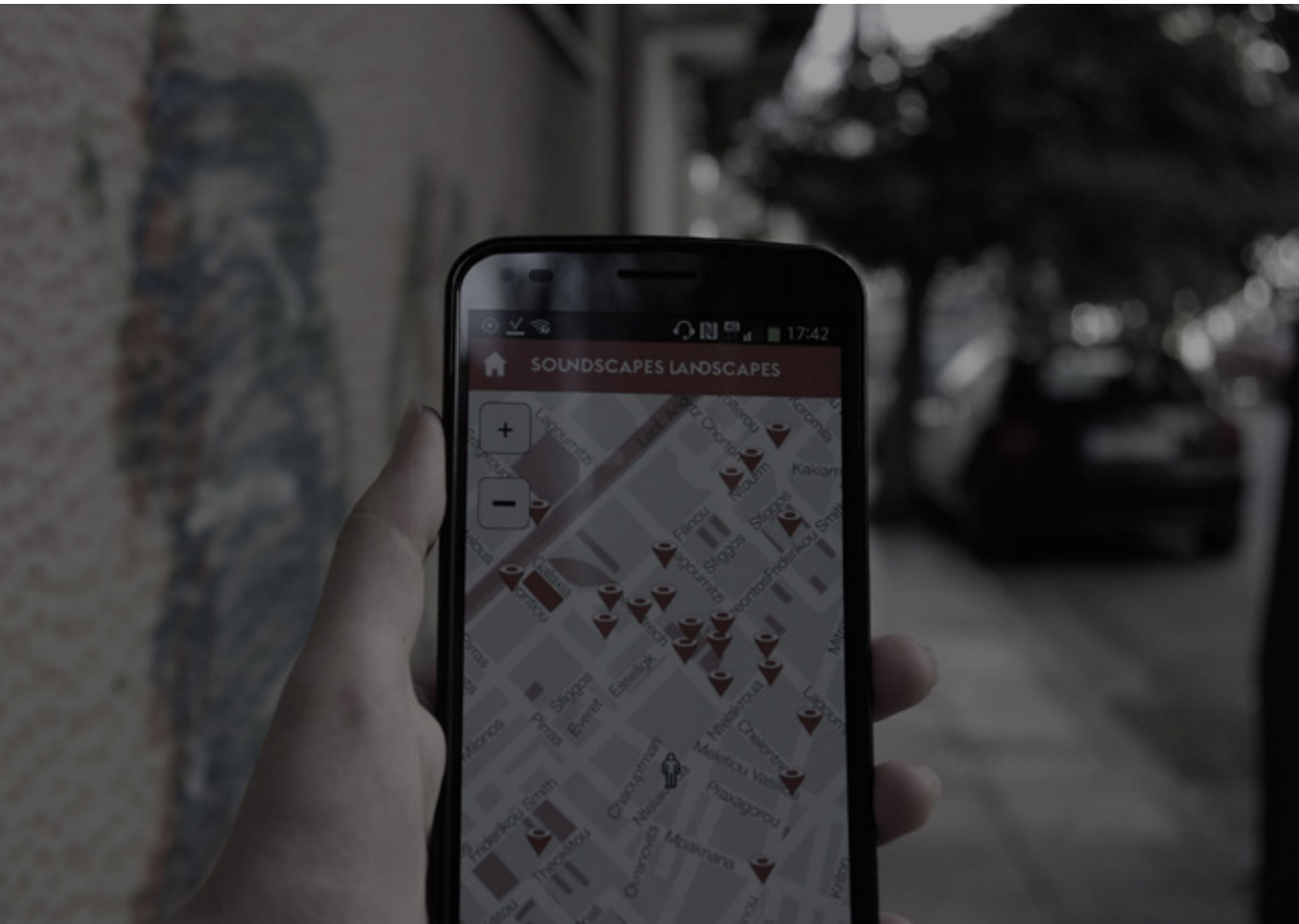
2010). With the integration of technology, art is becoming even more of a global medium, interconnecting different places, languages, and cultures. By mediating new paradigms of relating to one another and to the world around us, the fusion of art and technology has also made it easier to create and interact with new worlds, even more illusionistic and absorbing than ever (Vogiatzaki-Krukowski 2010).

Beyond the gallery: viewer as producer

The narrow streets are empty and still. The sounds playing in my ears fill the void of the abandoned streets. They guide me to a deserted basketball court. A metal wiry fence gates in the cracked coloured pavement. In my ears I hear the sounds of a ball bouncing on the now empty pavement before me. I hear yells and the sound of feet hitting the ground running.

I reach an intersection with a wall covered with a graffiti image of a spider. It comes to life through video art, skittering across the screen.

I come across a block of white washed apartments. I can faintly see pigeons sitting in the shadows of the square window ledges that cut deep into the white concrete. Gazing upwards, more birds sit along the black wires that string between the buildings. On my screen, a silhouette image of birds sitting on a wire appears, echoing the same image that I have just encountered in real life.



I reach a long stretch of street. The sign in the distance reads Mitrou Sarkoudinou. Someone is yelling at me. I turn my head in a subconscious response but no one is there. I hear more voices. They start to build in a frenzy. I realize the voices belong to market vendors. I hear the clanking of change and a busker playing the violin. It is an echo, a memory of an experience, providing a narrative to the now empty street.

Soundscape/Landscapes is an interactive art experiment hosted by the Onassis Cultural Center of Athens. Through a tablet device, a parallel reality within the city is revealed through sound and image, transforming a simple city walk into an artistic experience. Walking up and down streets, parks, and alleyways, the device provides a seamless soundscape, unique to the viewer's own experience. Hitting different points on the map, speeches, poetry, images, videos, electroacoustic compositions, and sound effects are triggered, bringing implicit narratives of the city space to life. Its intermediality destabilizes the hierarchy of senses, exploring a subjectivity that is embodied and corporeal rather than one that is exclusively visual. It is the experience of engaging at the threshold between two realities: one, the material/everyday and second, the immaterial/virtual.

Here is a case where the fusion of art and technology is being used to deconstruct the relationship between art/viewer, spectacle/spectator. The viewer is, quite literally, absorbed physically into the work of art, situated inside the spectacle. As the device acts as a mediator between realms of “real” and “play,” it mediates a new kind of relationship to the space around the viewer, where a new kind of subjectivity can be negotiated. It facilitates a new way of “seeing” the everyday world — it is the everyday but with the volume turned up. The viewer remains close to the everyday social world, but the playfulness of the experience disrupts it, inviting a critical engagement. The sonic and visual elements are surprising and interventionist, prompting the viewer to problematize the everyday world around them. Through the interactive experience, the spectator is given agency, transformed from a passive spectator into an active producer, co-creating and intervening in the creative process. Where they choose to walk dictates how the artwork will unfold. In this way, it is open-ended, unique to the individual's experience, and it is solely through the spectator's experience that the work of art can even exist.

Re-imagining the gallery

A building animated by the everyday city life. A city animated by a hybrid hyper-building. It does not want to become another static museum.

—Walking Building, Andreas Angelidakis, video animation at the Every End Is A Beginning exhibit, Museum of Contemporary Art

Virtual reality technologies — like the one being explored in the Soundscape/Landscapes experiment — also point significantly to imaginings of the gallery space in the context of the socioeconomic moment. In my interview with artist-curator Filipa, she explained that there is a definite re-imagining in the design of gallery and curatorial spaces. Artists, especially within the realm of installation/interactive/participatory art, must consider

architectural and environmental factors of the exhibition space. In its conceptualization of these factors, *Soundscapes/Landscapes* makes an intervention, extending the architectural limits of a curated gallery space by bringing the work “out there” into the real world. This mentality can first be seen developing in the Dada movement of the 1920s, specifically the Paris Dada Season of April 1921. André Breton coined the phrase “artificial hells” to “describe this new conception of Dada events that moved out of cabaret halls and took to the streets” (Bishop 2006:10). As a descriptor of participatory art, artificial hells embodied a series of artistic and political manifestations that sought to involve the city’s public in creative disruption and experimentation in the public sphere (Bishop 2012). Like the projects of artificial hells, *Soundscapes/Landscapes* embodies an artistic process that extends beyond the work of art itself. Its playfulness imparts meaning into action, reaching outside the walls of the gallery and penetrating materially and meaningfully into ‘real’ social life. In this respect, play is inseparable from everyday experience.

Andreas Angelidakis’ exhibition *Every End Is A Beginning* at the Museum of Contemporary Art also explores this theme of a museum in transition, in transformation, from the architecture of the built to the architecture of the unbuilt, the immaterial, and virtual. The very atmosphere of the exhibition denotes a museum in transition. The exhibition space itself is semi-lit, industrial, unfinished, a “work in progress” with visible signs of neglect and residues of its previous activity. As you enter, the words on the wall read, “I imagine a visitor entering a museum on their own, perhaps even thinking it may be closed, and the door left open by accident. This way, they experience the museum as a ruin, and every sign inside of it has a story to tell” (Angelidakis 2014).

When work is presented in a curated space, certain ideas about art are reproduced. Filipa’s role as a curator has allowed her to see the issues of power at play; a reliance on “expertise” and framing devices like the gallery help us to define what art is. As Marcel Duchamp elaborated, once an object is put into the context of a pedestal or frame, the object immediately acquires some characteristic of work of art (Stromberg 2009:27). Filipa tells me that in the presentation of an exhibition, artist-run galleries attempt to differentiate themselves from collection-based museums. Filipa’s role as an artist herself deconstructs power relationships and facilitates a closer connection and collaboration between art/artist and curator. For Filipa, art in a gallery should not be validated by experts or sheltered in specific historical knowledge, but instead it should live and be defined in a social space. This anti-institutional attitude can be seen becoming more significant in the current socio-economic context precisely because it is deeply rooted in social processes. Here we can begin to examine play not merely an activity but as an attitude (Sicart 2014:21). “Playfulness” is fundamental to experimentality. Play is creative and disruptive, giving us room to challenge our cultural values, institutions, ideologies, and the inner workings of the world we inhabit (Sicart 2014:10-11). By “playing with” and breaking down the politics of the gallery, Filipa also believes this creates a space much more accessible and democratized for the visitor to enter and connect with.

Among the various art spaces I visited, many of them were mix-use, combining and integrating art spaces along with a café and/or bar. Filipa explained to me that this was part of the financial model of underground art spaces, a way to finance projects and fund exhibitions without extracting commission from the artists. With that said, the fusion of the café/bar also appropriates social forms “as a way to bring art closer to the everyday”

(Bishop 2006:10). It reinforces the gallery as a social space, not simply for people to visit but to meet other people, network through other projects, have a conversation, drink, eat, play a game of chess, and socially connect. Filipa tells me that Art Wall's social dimension and emphasis on collaboration is the reason for her organization's success, both in Greece and internationally. With that said, this extension of art into the social field brings an otherwise separate way of experiencing the world closer into the realm of everyday life. Play and art are no longer spatially separated from ordinary life (Huizinga 1950:19). Instead, they perform a crucial role on very real social and political levels of life in crisis.

Conclusion

Even if the everyday is stifling and flat, we should not forget that no one can live exclusively in the unusual, the unheard-of, the unsaid. A slice of reality can reveal poetry, and the frenetic search for the exceptional can yield much that is pointless and trivial.

—Kostas Axelos, *Metamorphoses*, Estia 1998
(Read from device, *Soundscapes/Landscapes*)

During my stay, a certain pessimistic outlook towards the current state and future vision of Greece was central among the young attitudes I encountered. As a result, many desired escape — to move away, travel, or study in other countries. As I sat outside the venue of a performance theatre with a young woman and fellow audience member, I could see this desire as we discussed her love of engrossing herself in forms of entertainment activities like shows, art, and the Internet. When we become caught up in play, whether it is a performance, a film, or an interactive art experience, “we suspend our disbelief and enjoy these fictions if we were, for a few moments, dwelling in the world they represent” (Stromberg 2009:162). Play is freedom, a temporary “stepping out” of “real” and “ordinary” life” (Huizinga 1950:8).

In contemporary society, “some of our most important commitments and desires are sustained ... in activities of play, recreation, and leisure” (Stromberg 2009:162). In a period of intense reshaping to a culture's socioeconomic landscape, we can look to art, entertainment, and “play” spaces to track the resulting changing desires, commitments, and values. Through my research, I not only examined where experimental art spaces fit within this specific socioeconomic moment but also what engaging in them can actually do for people in crisis. Through the examination of games, gallery spaces, and participatory and interactive art, I argue that play inhabits a very important place in culture and human life. Despite being a separate “virtual” mode of human experience, play can mean very “real” things on the levels of social and political life (Huizinga 1950:1). By studying the cultural functions of play, we can begin to destabilize the boundary between realms of ‘play’ and ‘the everyday,’ ‘the “real,”’ and the ‘virtual.’ As Huizinga argued, play is much “more than a mere physiological phenomenon or a psychological reflex. It goes beyond the confines of purely physical or biological activity. It is a significant function ... there is some sense to it” (1950:1). Play can operate as a self-forming activity. Grigore, an artist

and co-curator at Art Wall tells me that art offers people the agency to make their own world, to find solutions, and to locate issues of self and identity. From chess playing to art making practices, these play activities can perform crucial roles, offering agency, relief, and stimulation in times of crisis. As Nicolas Bourriaud discussed, “Artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns, and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence” (1998:11). These activities can tell us something about the way life is lived in specific social contexts and periods of time.

Beyond the self-forming values of play, play also serves a social function, satisfying a social desire for connection. The experimental art spaces I observed offer people this space for desired social connection. From the level of the artist to the spectator, being “caught up” in the play of these experimental art spaces can facilitate social connection through paradigms of intersubjectivity, participation, and interaction. Within the context of the crisis moment, I see these spaces becoming forms of “micro-topias” (Bishop 2004:54) in the everyday. As facilitators of self-formation and social interaction, these “play communities” can provide provisional solutions in the here and now, where people can learn to inhabit the everyday world in more self-fulfilling ways.

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Arguing with Songs

An anthropological approach to music, ideology, and gendered subjectivity

“You cannot argue with a song” (Bloch 1974:71)

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This article seeks to problematize the anthropological tendency to view music as an autonomous force, suggesting that it may be better viewed as a discursive medium. It draws on existing anthropological, sociological, and musicological literature to argue that analogously to language and sound, the locus of the power of music lies less in its form and more in the various ways in which it is produced, circulated, consumed, and performed in culturally specific ways. Gendered ideology is located in these concrete, material actions of musical production, circulation, consumption, and performance; hence these musical activities serve to constitute the gendered subject in relation to dominant ideological power structures. Ultimately, by suggesting a way in which anthropologists could think productively with issues of music, gender, power, and agency, the article highlights the need to narrow the perceived disciplinary distance between anthropology and ethnomusicology.

KEY WORDS agency, gender, ideology, music, power, subjectivity

If one group accepts the sound of wind in the trees as music and another does not, or if one group accepts the croaking of frogs and the other denies it as music, it is evident that [different] concepts of what music is ... must distinctively shape music sound. [Merriam 1964:63]

Insofar as what constitutes ‘the musical’ is based on a subjective, culturally-constructed, and individually-contested dichotomy between music and noise, it has proven almost impossible to find a stable, analytically useful definition of the concept (Nattiez 1990).¹ A definition of music as we know it, as “combining vocal or instrumental sounds to produce beauty of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, [and] expressive content”² is inadequate in that it is largely a reflection of Western aesthetic philosophy whereby “beauty is irrevocably tied up with art” (Merriam 1964:266). For the purposes of this cross-cultural analysis, then, I take as my starting point Farnsworth’s broad idea of music as “socially acceptable patterns of sound” (1958:17). This allows space for the inevitable cultural variation in the “aesthetic attitude” which constitutes the definition of music (Merriam 1964:270; see also Nattiez 1990).

The key focus of this article is a theorization of music as representing an ideological discursive medium akin to language and sound, which constitutes gendered subjectivity by bringing 'gendered-selves' into being through power. In working towards this conclusion, the structure of the argument will be as follows. In the first section, I will trace the history of music in anthropology from structuralism to post-structuralism, arguing that what unites these seemingly disparate schools of thought is the idea that music is an autonomous, powerful force. Beyond this, I suggest instead that the locus of the power of music lies less in its form and more in the various ways in which it is produced, circulated, and consumed in culturally specific ways (DeNora 2000; see also Marx 1867). The second section argues that musical ideology is not separable from but rather located in the material actions of musical production, circulation, and consumption, which serve to constitute the subject through ideology and power (Althusser 1971; Kulick 2003; Rice 2003). I will elaborate the analytical validity of incorporating this theoretical stance into the anthropology of music by means of an analogy with the discursive media of language and sound. The third section explores the ways in which the framework elaborated in the first two sections illuminates the ways in which the production, circulation, consumption, and performance of music, in certain contexts, constitutes women's gendered subjectivity by calling into being the 'gendered-self' (Butler 1995, 1997; Althusser 1979). The fourth and final section considers some of the ways in which the constitution of gendered subjectivity through music also subtly enables opportunities for the enactment of women's agency (Mahmood 2005, 2001).

Embedded within this argument are two broader aims. Firstly, this argument expands on the argument of a group of scholars who have called for the recognition of the phenomenological significance of sound and in doing so point to music as a medium of power and social control in its contribution to the formation of subjectivity (Feld 1988; Feld and Brenneis 2004). Secondly, in recognizing that language, sound, and music have in common their inseparability from power relations and their mobilization to constitute gendered subjectivity, it can also be viewed as an attempt to narrow the perceived disciplinary distance between ethnomusicology and anthropology. It is curious to me that anthropologists have theorized language and sound as discursive media, yet music continues to be mostly viewed as the preserve of ethnomusicologists, occupying only a marginal space in anthropological literature.

Music in anthropology: an autonomous force?

What place has music held thus far within anthropology? Many have pointed to what they view as its notable absence in the literature (see Feld and Brenneis 2004; Samuels et al. 2010). In response to Clifford's question "what of the ethnographic ear?" a group of scholars have argued for recognition that the aural dimension of social life is as important as, if not more important than, the visual dimension in terms of human existence (1986:12; Erlmann 2004; Feld 1988; Feld & Brenneis 2004; Rice 2003; Stoller 1984; Spray 2011). This can be seen as an attempt to break away from the Western epistemological overemphasis on observation, from the elevation of writing to the status of the most productive anthropological tool, and from the uncritical use of grand theoretical frameworks in contexts where they are likely to be inapplicable.³

However, whilst this growing body of literature is crucial in working towards a more reflexive anthropology, we should be apprehensive of taking Clifford's question at face value. Clifford and others are perhaps incorrect to posit that the importance of the aural has been wholly ignored in anthropological practice. Rather, music has been present, even if only at the sidelines of the discipline, but has been misrepresented by both structuralist and post-structuralist anthropologists. It has repeatedly been theorized as an autonomous force, which is inadequate insofar as the real locus of musical power is to be found in the musical means of production; that is, in the production, circulation, and consumption of music by human beings (DeNora 2000; Godelier 1986; McClary 1991; see also Merriam 1964).

Some of the earliest mentions of music in anthropology are found in the work of Levi-Strauss (1978, 1969). His structuralist framework led him to establish a theoretical perspective whereby he perceived music to be analogous to, and representative of social structure. In the same way in which social institutions can only be considered relative to one another, musical notes only gain meaning when they are combined to contrast with each other. In other words, just as we cannot consider the social institution of marriage without considering its relation to politics in any given society, we must understand the relative relationships of musical notes to one another in order to comprehend an entire piece of music. Two further analogies proposed by Levi-Strauss (1978, 1969) are illustrative here. Firstly, the same principles apply to mythology; myths only make logical sense in their entirety. Secondly, the same is taken to be applicable for language, whereby a word only gains meaning in relation to other words which together form a system of culturally coherent symbols (see also Saussure 1916, 1983).⁴ Furthermore, underlying myth, music, and language are a series of binary oppositions which reveal the central contradictions of any given society. Ultimately, for structuralist thinkers, music, mythology, or language, given that they are social institutions in and of themselves make sense only insofar as they work with, and most importantly *mirror*, the entire cultural system of which they are a part whereby "changes in one element produce changes in other elements" (Merriam 1964:247; see also Levi-Strauss 1979, 1969; Uzendoski et al. 2005).

The work of Merriam (1964) and Uzendoski et al. (2005) follows clearly in this structuralist tradition. Firstly, Merriam (1964) argues that the dichotomous distinctions in the roles of children vis-à-vis adults and men vis-à-vis women are universally reflected in musical structure, which is reminiscent of the ways in which Levi-Strauss (1978, 1969) assumed the underlying structures of society to exist in the form of a series of binary oppositions.⁵ In pushing the 'music reflects society' hypothesis even further, Merriam (1964) argues that in some contexts music is further reflective of kinship structure, religion, political organization, and economics. Similarly, Uzendoski et al. (2005) posit that the social institutions of myth and music exist in relation to one another in their argument that the songs of Napo Runa women living in Amazonian Ecuador are a microcosm of mythology insofar as they reflect the mythological qualities of a bird that forms a central part of Napo Runa cosmology (see also Feld 1988, 1990:44–85).

Anthropological theorizations of music have largely moved beyond a structuralist perspective and tend to explore how music has a productive role in the *creation* of society, as opposed to being a mere representation of it. Seeger's (2004) work with the Suyá, an

Amazonian group living in the Xingu National Park in Mato Grosso, Brazil, clearly follows in this line of thinking. Music, for the Suyá, actively creates and affirms the “fabric of social life” (2004:6) and serves to produce a feeling of communality (compare to Durkheim 1965). The central focus of his ethnography is the ‘Mouse Ceremony’: a fourteen day long ritual which marks the passage of a young boy into adulthood, of which music, as Seeger (2004) sees it, forms a central part in generating and highlighting the young boy’s new identity. He further demonstrates how music assists in the coordination of collective economic activities such as hunting, as well as having a central place in the consolidation of relationships between men and their relatives, between humans and animals, and more broadly between the Suyá and their cosmology (see also Campbell 1995; Samuels et al. 2010).

In a manner comparable to Seeger (2004), Bloch (1974) also attributes to music a more active role in creating social life in his discussion of a Merina circumcision ceremony in Madagascar. However, rather than viewing music as creating communality, he views it as a source of power. He describes Merina circumcision rituals as being dominated by the repetition of songs, which are of a formalized nature. By this he means that there exist strict rules concerning how the songs should be sung and received by the audience, which involve a denial of a choice of intonation or rhythm and a series of stringent ritualized responses to the song. He argues that this formalization is less a reflection of ritual authority and more the source of social control. As an inherent consequence of formalization, the idiosyncratic nature of each ritual becomes irrelevant given that the creative potential of the music is so limited. Ultimately, as the possibility for creativity for the individual singer diminishes, the authority stemming from the musical form increases. As Bloch concisely puts it, “you cannot argue with a song” (1974:71; see also Keane 1997; compare to Csordas 1987:463; Harding 2000:47).

Thus far, it may appear that these thinkers are approaching music from radically contrasting theoretical perspectives. Whereas Levi-Strauss (1978, 1969), Merriam (1964), and Uzendoski et al. (2005) see music as representative of social structure, Seeger (2010) essentially sees music as creating collective effervescence in the Durkheimian (1965) sense, and Bloch (1974) argues for the acknowledgement of the authority-inducing aspects of song. However, there is a common thread of thought running through most of these thinkers’ work. What unites Levi-Strauss (1978, 1969), Seeger (2010), and Bloch (1974) is that they all, albeit implicitly, see music as an autonomous, powerful force.⁶ Their work resonates with McClary’s suggestion that “Western culture ... has tried throughout much of its history to mask the fact that actual people usually produce the sounds that constitute music” (1991:136). Put simply, music for these thinkers has agency by itself (compare to McLuhan 2001 [1964]).

Levi-Strauss, (1978) with his focus on the meanings inherent in structure, allows little room for actions of human beings in his work. To take a concrete example of this, in his discussion of one of Johann Sebastian Bach’s fugues, he argues that the story told by this particular piece of music is one regarding the development of social relations between two groups, whereby one group is ‘good’ and the other ‘bad.’ The fugues represent the chase of one group by the other, and the ending of the piece is a musical rendition of how the conflict is eventually solved (see also 1969). In this analysis, the piece of music itself delivers its meaning. He consequently omits to consider that the power of music to convey

a certain message lies not in the musical score itself, but in the way in which the music is understood and received in different contexts (see also Nattiez 1990:26).

A similar issue is to be found in Seeger's (2004) work, which may sound a curious claim when viewed in the light of his devotion of an entire chapter of his ethnography to the origin of songs (2004:52–64). However, the agentive power that he attributes to music comes to the forefront in his discussion of the gendered nature of the ritual. He briefly notes that the female participation in the musical ritual is minimal and further states that the function of the ritual is social reproduction, which suggests to me that Suyá women are consciously denied a role in social reproduction — a denial facilitated with music (compare to Godelier 1986). Seeger (2004), however, overlooks the possibility that Suyá men manipulate music as a means to their own end of male superiority, instead locating the power of music to create male solidarity and female subordination in the agency of the musical form itself. Viewing music as having intrinsic power to create female subordination almost serves to naturalize and consolidate this subordination by making it appear to be inevitable, thus halting the possibility for social change.

Bloch (1974) likewise views music as autonomous in his analysis of the power of songs to generate religious authority in the Merina circumcision ritual. He follows Durkheim's (1965) argument that through participation in ritual, collective representations come to have a force of their own, a stance that arguably leads to the application of agency to songs. For Bloch, the authority which stems from the ritualized singing is not to be found in the *process* of formalization or in the context in which the songs are sung, but rather in the musical structure, whereby “power [emerges] through form” (1974:60; compare to Csordas 1987; Harding 2000:47). The omission of the composition process and of context leads to issues which can be illustrated via a brief hypothetical example: if the power of the song lies in the song itself, then singing a formalized song would have the same social effect if sung by a woman whilst she is fishing as it does when sung by an established elder in a circumcision ceremony. Given that this is clearly not the case, then it surely cannot stand that the power of the song lies in its structure (compare to Bloch 1974; see also Keane 1997).

Ultimately, then, music in anthropology has not been ignored, but it has been seriously misrepresented due to assumptions that the locus of the power of music lies in its form. In following an assumption that musical meanings are immanent, these anthropologists have misrecognized the ways in which musical meanings are constructed in a particular context by musical producers, circulators, and consumers (DeNora 2000; McClary 1991; Merriam 1964). These authors are clearly correct in bringing our attention to the power of music, but “music...is not a ‘force’ like gravity” (DeNora 2000:99). The power of music is attributed by human beings and as such, is intrinsically connected to the musical means of production (see further Marx 1867).

This proposition finds its ethnographic counterpart in the work of Godelier (1986). He argues that female inequality, for the Baruya of Papua New Guinea, stems from their restricted access to the mode of production and to the material means of communication. Sacred flutes, which are used to communicate with spirit mediums during the male initiation rites, are accessible by men only. Although women will inevitably hear the music from afar, their punishment for coming into close contact with the magical instruments

is death (compare to Stoller 1984:564). Locating the power of the music of the sacred flute to evoke female subordination in the musical form itself implies the subordination to be inevitable.⁷ By contrast, turning to an analysis in which we consider from the outset that musical power is intrinsically connected to the musical means of production leads to the realization that the music of the sacred flute cannot exist without being played and produced by men, which ultimately implies greater possibility for social change (compare to Seeger 2004; see also DeNora 2000; Godelier 1986; McClary 1991).

The musical means of production and musical ideology

Of course, we would be left with an incomplete picture if we only consider the production of musical ideology. Given that it is also necessary to consider the reproduction of ideology, the argument here seeks to follow thinkers like Foucault (1981, 1990, 1991, 1995) and Althusser (1971) in an attempt to break away from the classical Marxist (1867) view that there is a material base (the musical means of production) which gives rise to ideology (see also Irvine 1989). In this, I propose ideological musical discourse to be embedded in material actions, or more specifically, in its production, consumption, circulation, and performance, which ultimately constitutes subjectivity by bringing beings into power through “repeated performance of norms” (Mahmood 2001:211; see also Butler 1990, 1995, 1997).

Insofar as the most fruitful way to demonstrate what I mean by this is through an analogy with the discursive mediums of language and sound, there is some value to be retained from the analogy between language and music proposed by Levi-Strauss (1969, 1978). The focus of this section, however, lies less in language and music being similarly representative of social structure, and more in their analogous capabilities as ideological discursive media, which constitute individuals’ subjectivity by bringing them into being through power (compare to Foucault 1981). My development of this analogy will be threefold. Firstly, I will consider Althusser’s (1971) and secondly Kulick’s (2003) subtly different theorizations of the way in which language interacts with material actions in order to call subjects into being, thus playing a key role in constituting their subjectivity. Thirdly, Rice’s (2003) theorization of the ways in which sound produces a particular type of subject is pertinent in that it provides a bridge between language and music. This bridge lays the final groundwork for the remainder of this article as a marriage of theory and ethnography, in which I will demonstrate the broader benefits of moving towards a view of music as an ideological, discursive medium that is embedded in acts of production, circulation, and consumption. This theoretical stance, I later argue, can shed valuable light on the constitution of gendered subjectivity.

Althusser (1971) has hypothesized that at the precise moment in which an individual turns around on the street in response to a police officer shouting ‘Hey, you!’ he or she is brought into existence as a subject of all-pervasive state ideology. The reason that this act of hailing produces the subject is that the individual is always aware that the police officer’s shouting was addressed to him or her. In Althusser’s words, “the one hailed always recognizes that it is really him [or her] who is being hailed” (1971:174). Despite the importance of this analysis in terms of it bringing to light the connection between language and subject formation and the phenomenological action of turning around to face a figure of state authority, one limitation of Althusser’s (1971) analysis lies in his

implication that “recognition is the necessary and sufficient condition of subjectivity” (Dolar 1993:80). What if we were to complicate his analysis by suggesting that subjectivity can be constituted through language even while an individual is largely unaware of it?

Kulick (2003) adopts a line of thought that is in many ways comparable to that of Althusser (1971). He argues that uttering the word ‘no’ in certain situations serves to produce men and women as sexual subjects, which is somewhat analogous to the effect of Althusser’s (1971) police officer’s ‘Hey, you!’. For Kulick (2003), in the instance of heterosexual rape, for example, a woman’s ‘no’ uttered to a man is distorted to mean “keep trying” (2003:141). What is intended as a refusal of acknowledgement is interpreted as a form of acknowledgement. Consequently, women are repeatedly blamed for failing to state their refusal strongly enough, and ultimately the inferior subject position of ‘woman’ is produced and consolidated in part through the normative utterance ‘no.’ Ultimately, Kulick (2003) complicates, and thus moves beyond Althusser’s (1971) theorization of language and subject formation in that he does not take it as a given that the subject is even subconsciously aware of the ways in which enunciating the word ‘no’ inadvertently produces her as a sexual, inferior female subject (Dolar 1993:80, Kulick 2003; see also Lakoff 1975).

How might this be applicable to music? An exposure of a bridge between the ways in which language and music call subjects into being can be found in Rice’s (2003:4) ethnography conducted in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary hospital, in which he discusses how sounds in a hospital work to bring patients into being as what he terms “patient selves” (see also Kapferer 1979:116). In contrast to Althusser (1971) and Kulick’s (2003) focus on language, for Rice (2003) the patient’s subjectivity is constituted through the non-linguistic acoustic dimensions of the hospital. The sounds of nursing staff preparing food, changing shifts, or rolling a medicine trolley along the floor, amongst other often intrusive noises, work towards the subconscious formation of the patient as a particular type of passive, docile subject (compare to Foucault 1995, 1991, 1981).⁸ Rice (2003) follows Foucault (1995, 1991, 1981) to argue that it always remains a possibility that the patient is under surveillance at any given time, in that the patient cannot see, and thus can never be sure whether he or she is being watched, which means that surveillance is self-perpetuating given the constant possibility of being watched. However, Rice’s (2003) work is also an attempt to move beyond Foucault’s (1995, 1991) emphasis on the ways in which control is exercised silently towards recognizing the monopolization of sound for the purposes of social control, whereby “sound appears to reinforce and complement the visual mechanism of authority rather than undermine it” (Rice 2003:8). Ultimately, then, for Rice (2003:4), hospital sounds function as a sonic form of surveillance, embedded in the material actions of doctors and nurses, which bring the patient into being as a specific type of docile “patient-self[f].”

Taking Rice’s (2003:4) analysis as a starting-point, the remainder of this article is an exploration of the ways in which the ideas developed in these first two sections can be seen to be applicable in a cross-cultural context. In other words, given that the power of music does not emerge from its form, how is it produced, circulated, and manipulated by human beings? How does it come to form an ideological discourse, which brings gendered subjects into being through power through the “repeated performance of norms” (Mahmood 2001:211; see also Butler 1990)?⁹

Music and gender: forming the 'gendered-self'

It has been noted elsewhere that the intricate connections between music and gender present fertile fields of study (see Stafford & Dodd 2013). Merriam has argued that gender differentiations are universally mirrored in music, or that "music reflects, and in a sense symbolizes, male-female roles" (1964:248). Some songs, musical instruments, or musical styles, insofar as he views them, will be inevitably reserved for men and others for women. He argues that this division can be made on a coercive, restrictive basis, or there may be mutual agreement that some musical styles or songs are more suited to men and others to women. Merriam's (1964) argument, although certainly not universally applicable, does find some empirical support from Uzendoski et al. (2005) who in their work with the Amazonian Napo Runa argue that the gender differentiations of musical practice whereby women sing and men play instruments reflect complementary gender roles (see also Seeger 2004).

However, Merriam's (1964) structuralist perspective is inadequate in its failure to address the highly consequential matter of who controls the production, circulation, consumption, and performance of musical discourse. It may well be the case that some musical instruments are reserved only for men, but to know whether these reservations are controlled by women has implications for the question of female autonomy (compare to Godelier 1986; Merriam 1964; Uzendoski et al. 2005). This section marries the theory developed in the previous two sections to an ethnography developed from sociology, musicology, and anthropology to demonstrate how such a perspective may illuminate gender relations. Insofar as music as a gendered ideology is concretely located in the material actions of production, circulation, consumption, and performance it can often be seen as playing a key role in constituting female subjectivity.¹⁰ In other words, I posit here that the material acts of music, in certain contexts, are inseparable from gendered power-relations and thus serve to bring into being the 'gendered-self' (see Althusser 1971; Butler 1990, 1995, 1997; Kulick 2003; Mahmood 2001, 2005; Rice 2003).

In the West, this 'gendered-self' tends to be forced into a normative gender binary of masculine-feminine, and is assumed to be heterosexual (Butler 1990; Halberstam 1998; Kulick 1997; Nanda 1986). These categories have reached an ethnographic brick wall when anthropologists have considered the constructed nature of gender, which has been illuminating of the fact that "many meanings that we perceive as 'natural' are the result of codified systems to which we have become acculturated" (Nattiez 1990:123). This codified, discursive system is often seen to be language, but music exists alongside language and also serves to naturalize gender roles, bringing the 'gendered-self' into being as a normative subject of dominant ideology (see also Cameron 1997).

DeNora (2000) takes this as her starting point in her focus on the connections between music, circulation and gender to consider their collaborative role in the formation of gendered subjectivity. Although her argument is grounded in England, her suggestion, if taken metaphorically, could be analytically fruitful if applied cross-culturally, analogously to the analytical usefulness of Althusser's (1971) police officer. DeNora (2000) posits that the question of who has control over a record player is more than a trivial matter of creating a musical backdrop for a romantic situation, and much more than a reflection

of already existing gender hierarchies. The critical difference between being a man or a woman pressing ‘play’ on the record player is central to the question of sexual and gendered subjectivity. Insofar as it is an act which produces subjects as sexual, it cannot be seen as an apolitical attempt to create an intimate ambient environment (Engelke 2012; see also Kulick 2003; McClary 1991). Music, then, when viewed as an ideological discourse, “is much more than a decorative art...it is a powerful medium of social order” (DeNora 2000:163).

Similarly, McClary’s (1991) analysis of Western operatic musical discourse points to the ways in which it is manipulated primarily to constitute sixteenth-century female subjectivity as subordinate in relation to men. Taking as her starting point a departure from other musicologists who have persistently attempted to describe music in terms of its structure, she traces and deconstructs the male-biased nature of Western music on the analytical basis that “music is always a political activity, and to inhibit criticism of its effects is likewise a political act” (1991:26). In the West, during the 16th century, male and female linguistic utterances were considered to be radically different (see also Lakoff 1975). Whereas male rhetoric equated to intellect and power, female rhetoric was taken to be a manifestation of sexual prowess. Insofar as opera production was (and largely remains) a male-dominated sphere, the gender politics created a circulation of operatic discursive constructions of women as sexual, powerless subjects, which in turn served to consolidate these gender discriminations. Prior to opera production being unveiled as a male-dominated field, the study of operatic musical discourse as autonomous has served to reproduce and consolidate the dominant cultural hypothesis that male is to female what intellectual is to sexual, and to naturalize the use of music as a medium manipulated to construct feminine subjectivity as inevitably powerless and subordinate (compare to Ortner 1973).

In considering how these ideas may be seen to resonate cross-culturally, Brinkman’s (2001) ethnography, based on songs that were sung to her during interviews with Angolan immigrants in Namibia, is seminal. The key focus of her book concerns the relationship between singing, gender, and politics — her more specific line of analysis being the 1961 Angolan war for independence. The surface connection between gender, singing, and politics, she argues, is as follows. Before the war, songs were sung mostly by men but in the periods during and after the war, women began to sing too. It seems then, on the surface, that gender equality is increasing, given that the act of singing became increasingly accessible to both men and women. However, Brinkman (2001) compels us to look beyond music as autonomous; to consider the fact that prior to the war, it was women who composed and circulated songs. In contrast, “during [and after] the war, the production and distribution of song largely became an affair of men and took on a more systematic character” (2001:25–26). This demonstrates that underlying the apparent increasing respect for the place of women in Namibian society is increasing gender inequality. As one informant put it, “women [know] more suffering,” which is intrinsically related to the fact that they have lost control over the means of production of songs (2001:69; see also Godelier 1986; DeNora 2000).

In Brinkman’s (2001) account, then, insofar as the songs are produced and controlled by men, they interact with male power to form a discourse which ultimately serves to produce the subjectivity of women as inferior ‘gendered-selves’; a subjectivity reproduced

and consolidated through the performance of songs. Ultimately, this demonstrates the concrete methodological issues which arise from a lack of cross-cultural focus on the producers, circulators, and consumers of these discourses of power: it blinds us to the crucial ways in which the ideology of music as emerging from thin air serves to naturalize and obscure gender inequalities.

On the other hand, this constitution of the subjectivity of the 'gendered-self' is not always necessarily a negative experience, but even so it remains intrinsically connected to power, production, circulation, and distribution (compare to Butler 1990, 1995, 1997). James' (1999) ethnography of the songs of women migrants, which form part of the broader musical style 'kiba,' (which he broadly translates into 'to stamp') in Johannesburg, South Africa, is a pertinent case in point. Prior to the 1970's, the 'kiba' was an entirely male musical domain, but women have since "evolved an autonomous and a specifically female version" of the 'kiba' (1999:45). 'Women's kiba' has migration as its foundation, which means that the women's songs can be interpreted, to an extent, as being musical discourses that are rooted in the power relations of migration. However, they simultaneously represent a creative adoption and reinvention of some of the men's musical style. Most importantly, 'women's kiba' is produced and circulated firmly within women's control, generating companionship and solidarity.

In the South African context then, despite the migrant women beginning their careers as disparate individuals who were dependent on men for social interaction, their control over the production and circulation of 'kiba,' or in other words, their monopoly on the musical discourse has ultimately enabled them to form a new-found sense of themselves as autonomous wage-earning women migrants (James 1999). To misinterpret music as an autonomous force in this context would obscure an important factor of these women's lives: the ways in which women produce and circulate the songs as a discourse which serves to mobilize their gendered subjectivity in ways that are beneficial for their own empowerment.

What unites these scholars is their argument that "musical discourse" is utilized in the political and social organization of gender, or the formation of gendered subjectivity (Nattiez 1990:xi; see also Brinkman 2001, DeNora 2000, James 1999, McClary 1991). Ultimately, a theorization of musical discourse as it interacts with power structures to bring into being the 'gendered-self' through repetition of concrete acts, whether as a negative or a positive experience, is intrinsically connected to a move beyond considering music to be an autonomous force (compare to Bloch 1974; Levi-Strauss 1969, 1978; Seeger 2004). Taking a step back from the ideology of music as operating with a power of its own, instead viewing it as a malleable medium of social control can, in certain contexts, shed valuable light on the deeper complexities of cross-cultural gender dynamics. A continuing reproduction of the ideology of the autonomy of music will leave us oblivious to the ways in which the dichotomous, discursive, and often hierarchical gender binary of male-female becomes naturalized through this exact ideology.

The musical agency of women

In following a fully Foucauldian (1981, 1995) line of analysis, I realize that I would be close to reproducing an argument akin to that of the Frankfurt School, epitomized by

Adorno and Horkheimer's (1944) article in which they argued that cultural products such as music, films, and radio are imprinted on individuals who have no scope for agency (Adorno & Horkheimer 1944; Benjamin 1968; Marcuse 1964). Although I agree with the basic premise of the Frankfurt School that music and politics are inextricably intertwined, it is also by now well established that the Frankfurt or Foucauldian (1981, 1995) standpoint tends towards an entirely pessimistic formulation of subjectivity. Beyond this, as McClary (1991:139) poses, "how does a woman ... negotiate with established musical discourses?" Taking this question as a starting point, this section seeks to establish a broader dialect between musical structure and agency, which ultimately allows analytical scope for the "interpretive flexibility" that musical structures often enable (DeNora 2000:43; see also Bourdieu 1990).

In theorizing musical agency, it is firstly necessary to consider a broader definition of agency beyond viewing it as synonymous with resistance (Bulter 1995, 1997, 1990; compare to Gramsci 1975). Mahmood's (2005, 2001) idea of relations of domination not necessarily being a simple matter of oppression or resistance is pertinent here. For her, the binary of agency and domination cannot account for "the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act" (Jassal 2012:15), or in other words, the ways in which agency can be importantly enabled by dominant structures of power (Mahmood 2005, 2001). Mahmood's (2005, 2001) work in Egypt demonstrates the ways in which pious Muslim women "strive to become ... shy, modest, preserving, and humble — attributes that have hitherto also secured their subordination" (Jassal 2012:14). These values are mobilized to cultivate the women's subjectivity; their 'gendered' (and in this case 'religious') selves (Agrama 2010; ; Hirschkind 2001, 2004; Jassal 2012; Mahmood 2005, 2001; compare to Butler 1995, 1997, 1990; see Laidlow 2002 for criticisms). A similar conceptualization of women's agency as self-cultivation enabled by dominant structures, I posit, can be fruitfully applied to musical discourses.¹¹

In moving towards an application of this theory of agency to an analysis of the 'gendered-self' in music, an illuminating analogy can be developed from scholarly discussions of the relationship between headphones and alienation in the general Hegelian sense of estrangement (see Bull 2000; Feld 1988; Rice 2003). Feld (1988) has argued that the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea consider headphones as representative of a desire for self-alienation. The private act of listening to music through headphones challenges the Kaluli conceptualization of music as being a public, communal activity (Feld 1988). A different idea of headphones stems from the Western capitalist context. Bull (2000) has discussed the ways in which headphones are utilized by individuals in London in opposition against the dominant urban landscape and the broader capitalist system. Using headphones to listen to personal music on the commute to work, for example, is a way to re-appropriate strict capitalist time for one's own pleasure (Bull 2000).

However, there are some subtle similarities in both theories. Comparably to Feld's (1988) conceptualization of headphones as alienation, an interesting paradox is illuminated in Bull's (2000) suggestion that headphone users are manipulating what is ultimately an alienating piece of mass produced technology in order to 'resist' capitalist alienation (compare to Marx 1867). Headphones thus cannot quite equate to resistance, and resonate more accurately with the cultivation of agency as theorized by Mahmood (2001, 2005). Although headphones provide some form of empowerment and control to

an individual commuting to work on the underground transport system in London, they remain firmly within, and in some ways are enabled by the broader project of capitalism (Bull 2000; Feld 1988; compare to Yochim 2010).

Likewise, women's musical agency often occupies a similar "liminal" space in relation to male musical discourses (Turner 1969:96; *Bluestockings Magazine* 2014; Farrugia 2012; Lindvall 2009, 2010; McClary 1991). In applying Mahmood's (2005, 2001) theory of agency, we can move towards realizing that women do have agency within the male-dominated musical discourse, insofar as they produce, distribute and circulate music in order to produce themselves as particular agentic gendered subjects.

One apt example of this comes from the paradoxical nature of Western aerobics (DeNora 2000). Although Western musical production is inherently male-dominated, the activity of aerobics, or in other words, exercise accompanied with music, has emerged from research conducted in Western contexts to be female-dominated (Farrugia 2012; McClary 1991; DeNora 2000). DeNora (2000) argues that females attending aerobics classes in England mobilize music to motivate their exercise, and thus to enhance their fitness levels. She argues that music is used to "produce them as coherent social and socially disciplined beings" (DeNora 2000:49). In a manner that resonates with Mahmood's (2001, 2005) analysis, these women likewise practice self-cultivation and enact their female agency by manipulating music for their own benefit simultaneously within, and against, the male-dominated domain of Western music. More specifically, this agency is importantly enabled by the very discourse that should, in theory, constrain it (see also Farrugia 2012; McClary 1991).

Another example of this type of agency is found in Jassal's (2012) ethnography of North Indian folk songs. She argues that peasant women's songs that accompany their agricultural labour in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar simultaneously "articulate the patriarchal values even as they critique them" (Jassal 2012:69; see also Stafford 2008). Whilst men largely work in the industry and service sectors, it is women who remain dependent on agricultural production, and their work is assumed to be merely supplementary to the male migrant income. The songs sung by the women articulate the need for men to recognize their important social role, and Jassal (2012) argues that they serve to strengthen the group of women as a collective. This seems, at first glance, to be an act of resistance in opposition to the unequal power relations between men and women. However, it is only by considering Mahmood's (2005) definition of agency that we can recognize the "bittersweet" paradox of these musical acts (Jassal 2012:91). It lies in the fact that the songs also match the rhythm of the repetitive agricultural tasks, which has a phenomenological effect on the women of increasing their economic productivity (see also DeNora 2000). Therefore, the agency of the women and their empowering collective singing remains firmly within and is importantly enabled by the patriarchal system (Jassal 2012; see also James 1999).

Ultimately, Mahmood's (2005, 2001) theorization of agency beyond viewing it as synonymous with resistance is a crucial coda to the end of this article. It cautions us not to be too quick to conclude that following their subjectivation as 'gendered-selves,' women transmit gender ideologies that further reinforce their marginal position. It is a concept which enables us to recognize a specific form of agency which is enabled by structures of

domination, which in turn leads to the consideration that certain contexts, women are, in their own ways, arguing with songs (see also Bloch 1974:71; Butler 1990, 1995, 1997).

Conclusions: listen to the sound of silence

The crux of the argument of this article has been a theoretical move away from seeing the power of music as autonomously emerging from its form or score (see also Bloch 1974 Levi-Strauss 1978, 1969; Seeger 2004).¹² Instead, I have argued that music has no power outside of the contexts in which it is produced, circulated, distributed, and performed. Arguing against the position that the ideology of gender relations is separate from the musical means of production (Marx 1867), I have suggested that analogously to language and sound, music is a discursive medium that can be utilized in various contexts to bring subjects into being through power. I have explored this in relation to the formation of the ‘gendered-self,’ arguing that the reproduction of the ideology of music is often seen to be concretely embedded in repeated actions (compare to Butler 1990, 1995, 1997). Further, I have argued that in the malleable medium of music, we find scope for arguments with songs (compare to Bloch 1974:171). Music can also be utilized by individuals or groups enacting their agency in Mahmood’s (2001, 2005) sense, crucially enabled by the dominant discourses, which points us towards a more complex interplay of structure and agency from a musical and anthropological perspective (compare to Bourdieu 1990).

Before I conclude, I would like to briefly reflect on what implications such an argument may have with regard to Samuel et al.’s (2010:330) call for an “aural reflexive turn.” This group of scholars takes issue with the fact that whilst there has been a visual reflexive turn in terms of how anthropologists interpret their data and write their ethnographies, which has fundamentally altered the ways in which anthropologists write and conduct fieldwork, no such representational critique has happened in the domain of the aural (see Clifford 1986; Geertz 1973). Samuel et al. (2010) ask, somewhat rhetorically, why representational issues of sound have largely been neglected, but they omit to outline an approach towards this reflexive turn.

One positive step forward towards a sonic-orientated reflexivity can be hypothesized with regard to the concept of silence and its relation to ethnographic practice. Broadly, this article can be viewed as an approach to “culture [as something that] may be heard and how we may listen to women who are rarely heard” (Jassal 2012:112). By contrast, some anthropologists have explicitly chosen to ignore silence. For example, Seeger (2004), in his ethnography of Amazonian singing practices, briefly notes that “silence [is] the mark of...socially disruptive emotions,” but then uses the negative connotations surrounding silence to argue that sound should be the primary research focus, which is curious given that silence is a crucial component of music. In that Feld (1988) similarly notes that for the Kaluli, silence equates to social alienation, I am more inclined to agree with Das (1997) who calls for a renewed research attention to silence, to what cannot be expressed with sound, which would have the twofold benefit of illuminating the complex interactions between social relationships, sound and silence, and shedding valuable light on the anthropologist’s own position as a fieldworker (Basso 1970; see also Stoller 1984; Walker 2013:203–216).

Ultimately, what I hope to have demonstrated is that the anthropology of music presents a fruitful and productive research avenue for anthropologists and ethnomusicologists alike. In pointing towards the centrality of power, subjectivation, and gender in music, perhaps we can begin to conceptualize rescuing it from its current position at the sidelines of anthropology.

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Notes

- 1 To take one example of this definitional difficulty, opinions differ over whether to include under the rubric of the term 'music' the magical word, or 'speaking in tongues,' which in its deviation from the 'normative' linguistic structure is seen by some as more akin to music than to language (see Bloch 1974; Csordas 1990:28; Malinowski 1935; Stoller 1984:563).
- 2 OED Online, under the word "music," <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124108>, accessed March 29, 2014.
- 3 This movement correlates with the increasing centrality of the phenomenological approach which stresses the avoidance of Western theoretical frameworks in favour of taking seriously lived experience as it is told (Bidney 1973; Csordas 1990; Jackson 1996; Throop & Desjarlais 2011).
- 4 Levi-Strauss (1978) argues that language and music differ importantly: whereas language is composed of phonemes, words, and sentences, music is composed of notes (equivalent to phonemes) followed by sentences; where language is a three-part process, music is a two-part process.
- 5 It is debatable whether this theorization would be applicable in the Amazon. Children are not treated as being vulnerable or 'young' in opposition to the 'wise' adults, but instead are given cigarettes and hallucinogenic drugs and are essentially treated as equal members of society (Rubenstein 2012; see also Harner 1978).
- 6 Although Merriam's (1964:14) work has a problematically structuralist theoretical stance, he cannot be said to be subject to the criticism that he locates agency in the form of music, given that he states from the outset that "music cannot exist on a level outside the control and behaviour of people." Likewise, Uzendoski et al. (2005) argue that it is the act of singing that is important, which points towards their acknowledgement of power being located beyond the musical form.
- 7 This hierarchy is not universally applicable (compare to Ortner 1973). However, even ethnographic work which focuses on the gendered nature of instruments as conducive to harmonious relations between men and women, such as that of Uzendoski et al. (2005), still points to a connection between music and gender and as such still resonates with Godelier (1986) and others (DeNora 2000; McClary 1991; see also Feld 1990).
- 8 This is reminiscent of Porath's (2008) argument concerning sound as a trigger of illness which points to an intrinsic connection between sound and its phenomenological relation to bodily construction (see also DeNora 2000; Jassal 2012; Merriam 1964; Nattiez 1990; Samuels et al. 2010).

- 9 It is largely due to limited space that I maintain gendered subjectivity as my key focus; this analytical standpoint could likely be fruitfully applied to considerations of religion, nationalism, and class distinctions (see Bourdieu 1984; Broyles 1991; Weber 1975;). This is especially salient insofar as gender is invariably mediated by these concepts, amongst many others.
- 10 For an interesting analysis of the subtle connections between gendered ideology and materiality in Amazonia, see Walker (2013:45–49).
- 11 The benefits of opening such a discussion are twofold: just as Mahmood’s (2001, 2005) idea of agency can assist us in articulating a clearer conceptualization of music, incorporating an idea of music within anthropology could be of assistance in articulating a better theory of agency (DeNora 2000; see also Bull 2000).
- 12 “Listen to the sound of silence” is a taken from the song “The Sound of Silence” by Simon and Garfunkel, two American folk singers who sang together mostly in the 1960s (see Renosano 2010).

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On Beauty, Power, Resistance, and More

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This paper uses an ethnographic exploration of women's body hair to reflect on anthropological frameworks for understanding. It asks how beauty and power connect to anthropological theories of emergence through everyday practices of body hair maintenance. This article considers these connections through an exploration of women's relationships with their body hair and body hair maintenance practices. These practices are situated within an emergent world through narrative vignettes. The outcome of the methodology used for this project challenges the existing power binaries, questions what lies beyond them, and inquires about ways of resistance.

KEY WORDS beauty, body hair, body mapping, feminist ethnography, witnessing

We had just finished tracing our bodies onto long sheets of paper and were mapping our hair onto them (Figure 1 and 2). As we drew, we talked about issues that came up for us around hair: sexuality, puberty, relationships with our parents and friends, political affiliations . . . We also gossiped and caught up. I had initially been worried about tracing bodies. I was working with women of different sizes, some of whom have histories of eating disorders; but the first three workshops had gone so well, and one friend I had been concerned about told me how great it made her feel to see her body mapped out next to ours. Upon reflection I think size was the only consideration I had really given in terms of how seeing ourselves mapped out might affect us.

My map and Penelope's lie next to each other on my bedroom floor and we laugh because we had both expressed feeling self-conscious about our neck hair.¹ Penelope draws breasts on to her map. They are triangles pointing at the ground (Figure 3 and 4). They sag. They looked the way that I fear mine might one day. Michele says, "That's not what your breasts look like." "How do you know? You aren't the one who sees them in the mirror every day," Penelope responds. We are silent for a moment and then get back to talking about American Apparel's new mannequins with pubic hair. We discuss whether they further commodify and sexualize women's bodies or if they are a genuine celebration. A feeling nags but I can't name it.

A week after Michele and Penelope's exchange, I am at a meeting in Caledonia. We mill about afterwards and a friend tells me she is learning a new language and it is exhausting



Figure 1

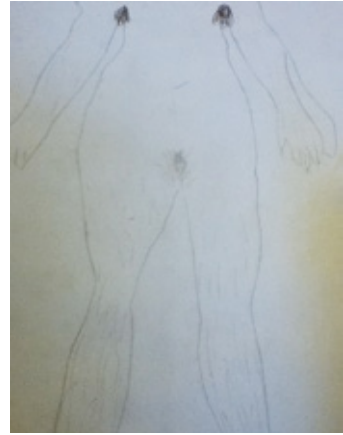


Figure 2

because of all the tenses. In English, she explains, words can just be things on their own. In most other languages words only exist in relation to other things.

I was used to thinking in binaries: power and resistance, right and wrong, thin and fat. Bodies do not easily conform to binaries. I have come to understand that bodies occupy a space in-between. My exploration of bodies has also allowed me to reflect on some of the limitations and potentials of current anthropological discourses invested in power and resistance. In understanding our everyday body hair maintenance practices, the simple narrative teaches us that growing body hair is part of growing up, and removing it is part of becoming a woman. But body hair maintenance practices are more complex than this narrative allows; as our hair grows we become, we teach each other the right ways to be, we do the wrong thing, we protect each other—our bodies are constantly becoming through these processes. We are never done and there is always more than we can name.

Through weak theory, Kathleen Stewart's (2008) work examines those nagging forces and feelings, the ones that itch with their own life—even without names. Stewart explores the constant becoming and the unfinished nature of ordinary lives. In this paper I explore ordinary moments in order to critique anthropological frameworks for understanding.

Time passes again. I am reading an essay from *Black Girl Dangerous*. The author writes on the experiences of women of colour with eating disorders,

I remember being hugely troubled by the language many of the speakers and health educators would use about their experiences: that 'eating disorders were about power and control, not beauty.' As if this were a dichotomy. As if beauty were something other than a system of control and domination. There is nothing shallow about beauty; I have drowned in it. [Balasubramanian 2014]

When I read this I think about being at the coffee shop when Penelope told me how she felt about her exchange with Michele weeks back during the body mapping exercise. "For me," Penelope asserted, "It's like telling your fat friend they are not fat; what you are telling them is that they are good or pretty and being fat is not good or pretty and therefore they are not fat." This is not a statement about the lived reality of your friend—it is a statement

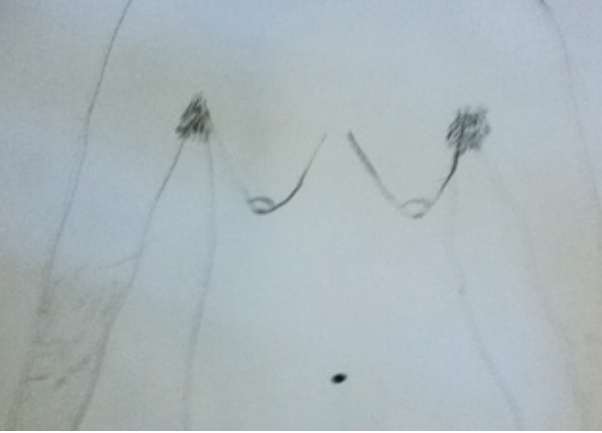


Figure 3

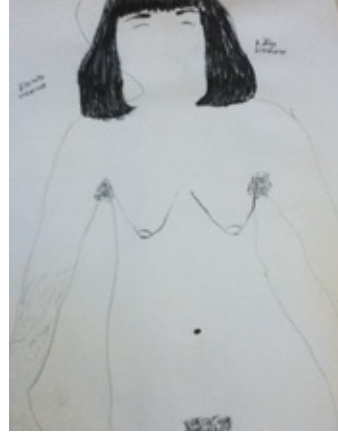


Figure 4

about you and what a good friend you are; yet it is more than that. It is about convincing your friend that they are beautiful, because people can do dangerous things to themselves when they don't think they are beautiful. It comes from a place of love. It is how we learn to be. We are not taught to love our bodies. If we were, what would that mean? Would it mean to accept our bodies the way they are? Or believing they should be something they are not? Or something else entirely? If beauty is a system of power and control, what would it look like to reject it? What would be just one step in that direction?

Penelope says she is the way she is because she is a woman in this society. She feels and embraces the pain her body has caused her as well as the moments of joy. She tells me about seeing a friend in a bathing suit with a similar body type to her and the joy she felt in recognition. That joy she felt was transformative — at least for a moment.

This paper explores the process of my understanding of body hair maintenance practices and beauty as simultaneously coercive and resistive, but also containing more than that binary can account for. I attempt to open up space between power and resistance where potentials live. This article is a reflection on practice, methods, and anthropological theoretical frameworks. Through exploring my friends' relationships with body hair maintenance and everyday practices, I have been able to reflect upon subjectivities and emergence. In an exploration of women's relationships with body hair maintenance I argue for anthropological approaches that emphasize becoming. I will argue that anthropologies of becoming can reject binary imaginations of the world — for example, the hegemonic ideas of how to be a woman Michele had internalized or the resistance of these ideas by Penelope — and that this engagement allows me to complicate these moments and see them as multifaceted.

There are many ways I could have interpreted the 'data' I gathered through body mapping workshops, semi-structured interviews, and critical self-reflection. I found that the way that many of the women I worked with, myself included, received this knowledge through small corrections, like being teased for having armpit hair. Most of us talked about our body hair maintenance practices (which varied) as if they were personal choices. I initially read this as some sort of internalization of power and control, but a moment of astonishment caused me to re-evaluate this understanding.

Astonishments cannot be planned for—they are the moments an anthropologist hopes and waits for, when what is normal becomes extraordinary and what is extraordinary

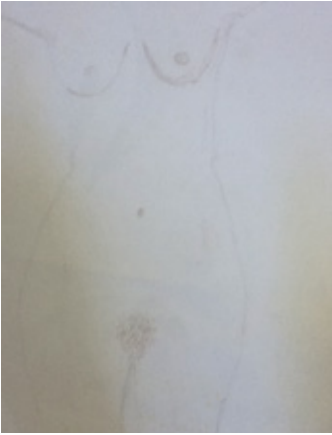


Figure 5



Figure 6

becomes normal (Shweder 2000, Taussig 2011). The moment between Penelope and Michele showed me the limits of my modes of understanding and highlighted a dangerous assumption I had made—that we could talk about body hair without talking about bodies. This moment demonstrated that there were aspects of our relationships to body hair that were not captured through the reductionist framework of power and resistance. My friends' decisions were not only about individual choices or structural forces.

Despite the fact that I have related the small bodily corrections I witnessed and experienced to a system of control called beauty, I think it is important to understand the examples I give not as representative of this system, but as situations that are part of a world emerging and full of potential. These moments are informed by power but have the potential to subvert it, re-inscribe it, or complicate it. Engaging in the world this way is complimentary to my feminist upbringing and my continual engagement with feminisms. This worldview has made me critical of the concept of culture or seeing the world as static, and it has undoubtedly influenced my research, methodology, and interpretations. This has also informed my choice to take a weak theoretical approach (Sedgwick 2003; Stewart 2008), allowing me to seek potential rather than trying to capture my research in a modernist framework which can be reductive.

What does it mean when Michele tells Penelope that her body is not the way she sees it? Is this love or coercion? Is this protection? What happens when love means denying someone's experience of their body? What happens when we love but have internalized these systems of control and domination? Can we subvert them? Can we resist them? What would this look like?

Theories of power and resistance provide easy frameworks to answer my research questions, but they cannot account for everything. I think it is more productive and interesting to ask after what is left out of these frames. Kathleen Stewart (2008) suggests to add to, not add up, or to allow the world to be multifaceted rather than forcing it into a theoretical framework. This has been invaluable for this exploration.

The modernist approaches to anthropology most readily available to me have been critiqued for supporting colonial logics of representation (Mitchell 1988). Many anthropologists' before me have explored knowledge production and examined connections in order to avoid continuing this violence. I was particularly influenced by Ulf Hannerz's



Figure 7

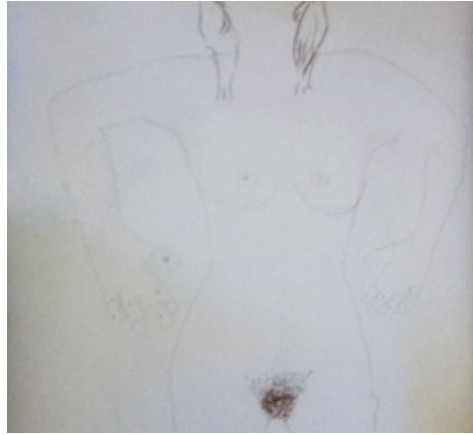


Figure 8

(2012) “Reflection on Multi-Sited Ethnography.” He argues for approaching the field as an unstable entity and focusing on connections, rather than searching to describe a stable and bounded entity called culture, in order to avoid reproducing a violent anthropology. Violence in anthropology occurs as the researcher over-determines and influences the production of certain acceptable ways of being; this mode of anthropology is the handmaiden of colonialism. I will continue in the critical tradition of Hannerz and, like Stewart, add to rather than attempt to produce the seminal text on women and body hair.

The desire to move past representation and description has informed my methodology. My primary method of body mapping attempts to escape anthropology’s traditional methods such as interviews or participant observation, although I conducted semi-structured interviews following the body mapping workshops. A method I had not initially expected, but one that became important, was astonishment. This method cannot be planned; for moment of astonishment, one that reorients you to your field, is by definition unexpected. In my case this was the seemingly ordinary correction that Michele gave to Penelope. I could not make sense of it through my usual frameworks of understanding that saw power and resistance as important forces, so I allowed this moment to challenge these frameworks (Taussig 2011).

In order to approach my field with a focus on connection, I began by asking how body hair and identity are related. Only recently have I realized that I was actually asking different questions: how are notions of beauty and power related? How does resistance fit into this picture? What doesn’t fit into this picture at all? However, as my approach to the field was influenced by the former initial research question, there were challenges and painful moments, albeit unintentional ones.

The first challenge I faced was around representation and the composition of my group. I knew my time was limited so I decided to only speak to women. Although I reached out to a diverse group of friends, the women who were most responsive were white cisgender women, and the data I collected reflects this. I am sure there are a number of factors that account for this but time and space limits this discussion. After some careful thinking and internal debate I decided to work with the people that had expressed interest in these workshops and make it clear that the women I spoke to were not representative of all women.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Although women may share certain oppressions, such as misogyny, I am sure the data I would have obtained from speaking to primarily non-white women would have been very different, just as it would have been if I had spoken to women of different ages or from different geographic locations. As a researcher, I think this experience taught me the difficulties of being representative without being tokenistic. Instead, I have attempted to move away from representation in order to see potentials rather than seeing my friends' experiences as representative of some hidden reality.

Doing this project also highlighted another difficulty researchers deal with: how to approach knowledge without immediately putting it into a theoretical framework or comparing it to our own experiences. What I admire about anthropology is its ability to see possibilities and other ways of being. As a feminist I believe other modes of being are possible and anthropology has allowed me to explore these other life worlds. At first I understood shaving, waxing, and other body hair maintenance practices as coercive but also possibly as resistive. It was coercive because we had internalized certain acceptable ways of being, and resistive because we sometimes shaved or didn't shave for ourselves. My friends taught me that it was not so dichotomous. I could have interpreted our workshops using this binary if it wasn't for that moment between Penelope and Michele which showed me how power and knowledge work in intimate and loving ways that are not easily appropriated into a binary of power and resistance. What this moment produced is not easily captured in words. Part of what it exposed was how body mapping, as a methodology, reproduced a modernist, potentially violent anthropology.

Eve Sedgwick (2003) and Kathleen Stewart's (1991, 2008) writing on weak theory was indispensable in my approach to this challenge. Sedgwick writes that the 'paranoid' or 'strong' approach that critical theory often carries can be a hindrance in the way that it encourages everything to be understood within frameworks and consequently cuts us off from the full potentialities that exist in every moment. Weak theory attempts to explore these potentialities by not appropriating or explaining every moment through a larger structure or system—or culture. Kathleen Stewart's writing revealed to me one form this approach can take. My experience with body mapping showed me the difficulties of not interpreting data immediately and through familiar, comforting frames.

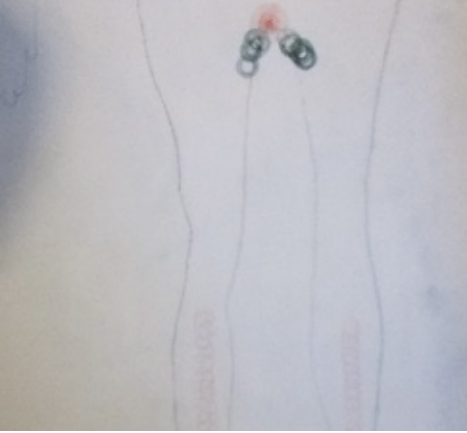


Figure 11

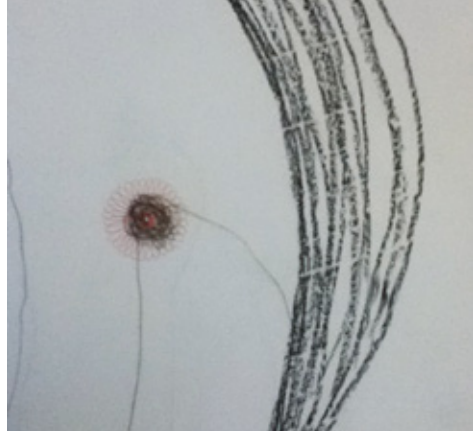


Figure 12

Body maps are, at their most basic, large-scale images of a body (Gastaldo et al 2012). I initially had felt that body mapping would be an interesting way of telling stories and having conversations that may not normally be had, even among close friends. The pictures throughout this essay are of some of the body-maps we produced (Figures 1 to 12). I had initially decided on body mapping as a method to avoid positivistic representations of bodies, but because of the way I used and understood the method it led exactly to what I had attempted to avoid. We produced images of bodies that looked how a body is supposed to; I realized this when Penelope deviated from the norm. I initially had felt this was a major failure but the conversations we had around the maps were reflexive and interesting.

The maps and drawings we produced of our bodies were telling of how we imagined ourselves—or feel obliged to in certain ways. This doesn't mean body mapping has to be done this way and, in fact, my friends gave me a number of ideas of how I could have used this method differently. One suggested that starting with a blank sheet of paper and not tracing our bodies would have led to something different and more expressive; another suggested starting with conversations meant to trouble stable ideas about our bodies might have helped. Other suggestions included encouraging the use of collage or beginning with blind contours.

One friend told me that the tracing aspect of the maps made them prescriptive from the start. This is perhaps part of the reason why Penelope drawing her breasts differently from the rest of us was so striking. I feel that if we had approached the drawings differently, and had a few conversations before we started, they could have looked different. Michele and I had talked pretty extensively before we started workshops and her map was very expressive and abstract (Figures 10 to 12). Perhaps another challenge was that four workshops and a few conversations did not give us enough time to re-imagine our bodies or even fully understand the way we feel about them.

Does the possibility exist that we can ever draw a body that looks how we feel? Although Michele's map expressed feeling, it was still positivist in many ways and needed words to explain the feelings it was expressing, and when Penelope tried to make an expressive map Michele corrected her. The stories that came up around the maps and in

the workshops were often about corrections. Corrections are a part of gaining knowledge about how we are supposed to be and look; we are not supposed to shave for anyone else but it is okay to do it for oneself; we are not supposed to shave our thighs, arms, or eyebrows but rather pluck them instead.

Some of this learning, in terms of where we are supposed to use body hair management practices and what implements we should use, was easy to pinpoint while some of it was more fleeting. We had all experienced a moment, usually around the age of 11 or 12, where we had shaved the wrong part of our body or used the wrong implement. In these cases the corrections came from our peers as many of us didn't have mothers who shaved or could teach us how.

Two friends had shaved the middle of their eyebrows and when questioned by peers had lied about it, suddenly realizing it was wrong. However, no one said they had shaved, trimmed, or plucked because of these moments of correction they previously experienced. No one said they changed their hair for a lover. Explanations were always about how nice it felt to be smooth or to do something small for oneself. Of the women who didn't shave, not one said they didn't because of coercion or for anyone else. That was also framed as an individual choice. Before experiencing astonishment I interpreted these explanations as internalization of a neoliberal white feminism that privileges choice.

The small moment I witnessed between Penelope and Michele complicated my interpretation and called the very idea of choice into question — it astonished me (Shweder 1991). Did Michele choose to correct Penelope? Were we all choosing to make almost identical maps because we all felt the same way about our bodies? Alternately, were we being coerced? For whatever reason this moment could not be interpreted through my previous frameworks. So I did what Taussig (2011) suggests and sat with this 'not-knowing' moment and allowed it to change me and the research.

Reflecting helped me see that the corrections we experienced were not simply about structures limiting our agency or discipline and control. It was not as simple as people coerced into changing or removing their body hair or people choosing to do these things. The moment I witnessed was not particularly exemplary of corrections, but it complicated this idea I had been wrestling with, the feeling that made me itch. This moment taught me viscerally how beauty and power are aligned. But there was beauty in Penelope's refusal of this correction too. What Penelope did by drawing her breasts as she saw them was resistance but not just resistance. I want to avoid naming this moment as long as I can, as the naming of a moment moves it from a place of potential and movement, to a place where it is reduced and loses its power (Massumi 2002). To do this moment justice I must allow it to be many things at once and have many implications.

It could be Penelope asserting her agency.

It could be transformative.

It could be friendship or love.

What I am trying to say is that this moment is full of possibility and potential; it may not have simply re-oriented me, it may also have the potential to re-orient Penelope to her body. It could re-orient Michele to hers. I want to let this moment be all of the things that it could be. I don't want to capture it in a theoretical framework; I want to let it be all of this and more simultaneously.

The weak theoretical approach that I took to this project adds to a growing literature in anthropology that uses anthropology's ability to explore both the macro and the micro to see a world in becoming (Biehl and Locke 2010), to track potentiality (Stewart 2007), and to understand and interrogate our own understandings (Tausig 2011). João Biehl and Peter Locke look at worlds in becoming that cannot be explained by "the kind of theory readily available in the current anthropological toolkit—Foucault inspired 'biopolitical' approaches for example, focusing on rationalities and discourses, technologies of power and subject making, or overly deterministic neo-Marxist frameworks such as 'structural violence'" (2010:332). Biehl and Locke critique these approaches as limited and limiting. These theories are strong and add up rather than add to. They cannot aid in opening up the potentials, like those Kathleen Stewart (2007) tracks through everyday lives. Finding a space outside of power/resistance means that people make their own lives meaningful and have a space where their lives aren't shaped by either of these forces (which are two sides of the same coin). This is very exciting for me as someone who is an activist and an academic because it gives me real hope for a future, or a present, in which self-determination is actually possible. It makes me feel like anthropology can escape the colonial discourses it has been mired in since its inception.

A criticism of this type of theorizing could be that it is individualistic, as it does focus intensely on individuals. This focus on individuals could miss larger structural forces. For me this aspect of theorizing worlds in becoming was appealing because I was attempting to look at a small group of people without universalizing their experiences. I wanted to understand the forces that might shape their worlds but also see them as agents. This mode of theorizing allowed me to do exactly that, but this potential criticism is one I will reflect on moving forward.

The stories I have told at the beginning of this paper all contain a force or charge that have made me reflect on the ways in which they connect, and other ways in which they do not. My friend who told me that English words existing on their own and not in relation to other things was also telling me that it was foolish and naïve of me to think that we could talk honestly about body hair without talking honestly about our bodies. Body hair only exists in relation to the rest of our bodies, and the rest of our bodies only exist in relation to the space they move through. These relationships are more than coercive or resistive—they are both, while also something in between. In trying to reflect upon our relationships with our bodies and hair, which has been painful at points, I may have inflicted more pain. I hope that my methodology has been reparative (Sedgwick 2003, Stewart 2008) and offers hope and possibility. For me, the appeal of anthropology is in the way it sees the world optimistically, and people as meaningful agents in their own lives while still recognizing the ways in which structural forces can affect people's life choices. Through anthropological methods I have been able to explore how our everyday practices, such as body hair maintenance, are full of potential and not easily reduced to a binary opposition.

Notes

- 1 Names have been changed.

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Mindfulness and Reverence in Peace Building

A Khmer Buddhist alternative to Bateson's purposive-consciousness

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This is an exploration of Buddhist mindfulness as a means of conflict resolution and peace building. Drawing on monks' efforts in post-genocide Cambodia as its case study and inspiration, this essay considers firstly, traditional environmental security conflict theories and secondly, Batesonian purposive-consciousness. Given the limitations of both these approaches in articulating the Khmer case, a theoretical framework for Buddhist mindfulness as peace building is called for. Mindfulness is explored by examining legal notions of "standing" as an alternative mode of theorizing conflict and peace. Reverence and the sacred are explained as key concepts in effective peace building, particularly through the examples of tree-ordinations and peace marches. Given that, at the heart of this enquiry, lies the deeper question of how we can live more peacefully and less violently on this earth, connections are drawn to environmental issues and to anthropology's nature-culture paradigm. The conclusion is that at the heart of conflict lies a dichotomous world-view, and at the heart of peace building is not the erasure of this dichotomy but, more importantly, the practice of reverence.

KEY WORDS Buddhism, Cambodia, conflict resolution, environment, Gregory Bateson, mindfulness, sacred

After the Cambodian genocide, Supreme Patriarch Premdach Maha Ghosananda led peace-marches, also known as truth pilgrimages, starting from the Thai border and across the Cambodian countryside. Inspired by these historical events and driven by an effort to examine the philosophical dimensions of Cambodian monks' peace-making efforts, this paper is an *exploration* of themes raised by these events. In a nutshell, this paper is about conflict and healing. It is an exploration of why violence occurs and what helps heal in post-violence contexts. What are the mechanisms by which peace marches can be successful in preventing fighting from breaking out? In Cambodia, why did families walk for over twenty kilometers just to see the monks pass by? What is it about Buddhist teachings that might be helpful in reconciliation and peace building? And, more broadly, what implications does all this have to how we inhabit the earth, how we live with the land?

The writing style of this essay is expressly reflexive.¹ It is intended to form an invitation to you, to participate in this journey of exploring the entwinement of ideas around

mindfulness, reverence, the sacred, and violence. Thus, the writing is molded as flowing suggestions rather than crafted as explicit argument (and to this end, the precision of the argument articulated in the subtitle may be misleading). Regardless, there remains a structure to this journey: first I sketch the context in which these peace marches arose and then make some connections to traditional international security literature on environmental conflict. However, traditional conflict-studies literature is limited in its application here, and I argue for more anthropological approaches. Section II delves once more into brief historical review, of these post-genocide peace-building efforts in Cambodia, and then articulates Gregory Bateson's formulation of consciousness in his *Steps To An Ecology of Mind* (2000). I consider Bateson's approach as an alternate lens through which to examine peace and conflict. However, even this has its limitations, and I suggest a framework of conflict-resolution mirrored in the case study itself: that of Buddhist mindfulness. Section III explores this form of mindfulness and its relevance to peace building, and here, I examine the implications of reverence and sanctification. Section IV returns to and develops the case study of peace marches, in preparation for the Concluding Thoughts, which further brings these strands together. The precision in writing style of this introduction is hopefully absent from the rest of this paper; as explained earlier, this paper is also an attempt to explore a more reflexive style of writing that invites reflection rather than persuasion — in the hopes of mirroring a form of writing closer to Buddhist mindfulness than to Batesonian consciousness.

Section I

The Context: Dhammayietra and Shante Sena

On April 12th 1992, over a hundred refugees and monks crossed the Thai border and re-entered Cambodia on foot, beginning what would soon become internationally celebrated as a peace movement (Poethig 2004). Thousands of families in the Cambodian countryside were elated to see not only the orange-robed monks, absent since their expulsion by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, but also the “largest group of peaceful people they had seen in years” (Bhikkhu 2009:47-48). Throughout the countryside, the monks performed the traditional Buddhist water blessing ceremony, sprinkling water to symbolically wash away tragedy and sin. A month later, on May 13th, despite the land mines and the ongoing fighting, over a thousand walkers — for the original refugees and monks had been joined along the way by supporters — finally arrived in the Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia (Bhikkhu 2009). This repatriation after more than twenty years of exile was led by none other than the elderly monk, Maha Ghosananda, the Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia (Bhikkhu 2009).

From this repatriation blossomed an annual pilgrimage of truth, the Dhammayietra. For the next several years, supporters walked amidst land mines and between armies. Caught in the crossfire between government soldiers and Khmer Rouge insurgents, they continued to walk, and they continued to spread the message of peace (Poethig 2004:203-207). Maha Ghosananda led the monks in re-teaching the Buddha's teachings. As Kathryn Poethig explains (2004), during the fifth Dhammayietra in 1996, the walk focused upon the connections between the continuing civil war and violence, illegal logging, and deforestation. During this peace march, Maha Ghosananda ordained trees at every village they

passed, explaining to the villagers that, “When you kill the tree, then you kill the monk” (Bhikkhu 2009:67).

Maha Ghosananda’s teachings took place within the context of a post-Khmer-Rouge society. Upon the Khmer Rouge’s ascent to power, the new government evacuated the cities and put the population to work: clearing the forest to generate more farmland (Bhikkhu 2009). Monks were also expelled or executed; under the regime of the Khmer Rouge, the number of monks in the country dwindled from around 65,000 to 3000 (Bhikkhu 2009:39). One of Santidhammo Bhikkhu’s sources, Maha, notes that those who escaped the Killing Fields fled to refugee camps across the border in Thailand, where “streets were crowded, sewage flowed in open gutters, food and water were scarce, and most refugees huddled inside their tattered cloth tents” (2009:38). Perhaps equally harsh was the banishment of Buddhism; “to many [Cambodians], eliminating Buddhism is eliminating ... Khmerness. Living without Buddhism is living without tradition and culture” (Sam 1987:90).

In those refugee camps, every time Maha Ghosananda or another orange-clad monk passed through the camp, “the gloom that had enveloped the camp instantly turned into excitement,” for refugees were reassured to see the long-since forbidden devotion and reverence (Sam 1987:38). As Yang Sam (1987:38) continues to describe, when Maha Ghosananda once distributed the Metta Sutta, Buddhist teachings that instruct compassion and forgiveness towards one’s oppressor, the refugees were so overcome with emotion that they “fell to their knees, prostrated, wailing loudly, their cries reverberating throughout the camp.” The freedom to show reverence and devotion, that had been forbidden for so long, moved the refugees.

In 1990, the US finally withdrew support from the Khmer Rouge, and the consequent signing of the Paris Agreement in 1991 resulted in the closing of refugee camps in Thailand and the repatriation of more than approximately 300,000 refugees (Bhikkhu 2009:44). Just prior to this, Bob Maat, an expatriate in Cambodia, had founded the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation with a Khmer monk, Venerable Yos Hut Khemacaro (Poethig 2004). It was this coalition that organized the first Dhammayietra and invited Maha Ghosananda to lead it. Maha Ghosananda called truth the first casualty of war; thus the Dhammayietra, a “pilgrimage of truth,” is synonymous with a walk that is the opposite of war: a pilgrimage that births peace (Bhikkhu 2009:44). In a publication by the Dhammayietra Center for Peace and Nonviolence, Venerable Kim Teng (1994) explains that the Shante Sena Forestry Association, formed with the support of Maha Ghosananda, was dedicated to training volunteers in Buddhist teachings on mindfulness so that they could carefully conduct environment and peace-related work. Shante Sena literally translates as “army of peace,” and their efforts were informed primarily by Buddhist teachings (Teng 1994).

Traditional environmental security literature

The tone of conflict has shifted in the last few decades, especially since the end of the Cold War, from being centered on ideological struggles to being centered on resources (Richards 2005; Bateson 2000). As Venerable Kim Teng (1994), the leader of the Shante Sena Forestry Association writes, “Even if political parties cease fighting over politics, fighting over scarce natural resources will increase, particularly as rainfall diminishes and

people become desperate.” Though some research shows that there is “no direct connection between deforestation and war” (Richards 1996:115), post-Cold War conflicts have been centered on poverty and environmental pressures (Richards 2005; Homer-Dixon 1991). These new wars, coupled with the post-Cold War need for “overfunded militaries to legitimize their existence in the face of clamoring for the Peace Dividend” have resulted in a surge of interest around environmental security (Peluso and Watts 2001:11).

Within environmental security literature, two classic theorists’ works are relevant here: Thomas F. Homer-Dixon’s (1991) and James Fairhead’s (2001). Homer-Dixon’s framework for “relative-deprivation conflicts” resembles the rise of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. The Vietnam War displaced the Cambodian population and depleted the nation’s natural resources, inevitably resulting in Cambodia’s economic deterioration (Peluso and Watts 2001). Many factions abounded, and the “sense of economic injustice” (Homer-Dixon 1991:110) felt by those who had fled the cities caused them to band together to form the Khmer Rouge, to overthrow the state, and to create Democratic Kampuchea. James Fairhead’s (2001) framework further serves to explain the mass population displacement and deforestation that occurred *under* Democratic Kampuchea; for after expelling all inhabitants from the cities in waves of mass-marches, the Khmer Rouge set the population to work on clearing forests for agricultural land and on farming (Bhikkhu 2009:35). Given the natural resources that the Khmer Rouge were aware of (presumably timber, agricultural land, fish stock, and maybe gemstones), and given the political ideology of Democratic Kampuchea, it should come as no surprise that Khmer Rouge policy focused upon exploiting Fairhead’s “immobile materials” (2001:226) and coercing — or, in this case, creating — “tied labor” (2001:229). The exploitation of “immobile materials” had gone so far that since the Khmer Rouge ascended to power, the amount of forest in Cambodia had fallen from 73% to 40% (Ghosananda 1995).

Cultural models, cosmology and world-views: A call for more anthropology

While the frameworks outlined by Homer-Dixon and Fairhead are relevant to the conflict in Cambodia, there remain striking limitations to these theories. For they mistakenly take cultural values and world views as static over a given period of time and even, to an extent, over different regions. The environmental security literature may explain the political and economic causes of environmental conflict, but it fails to consider not only the culture of conflict and the anthropology of conflict (see Peluso and Watts 2001; Richards 2005) but also the anthropology of the environment (see Descola and Pálsson 1996; Dove 2014; Dove and Carpenter 2008; Ingold 2000) and political ecology (see Robbins 2012).

Recognizing the non-static nature of societal values in the context of conflict studies is important. For instance, the Cambodian genocide can even be explained as a conflict between two different Khmer cultural frameworks: the gentle ethic of Buddhist non-violence teachings; and the violent ethic that descends from the rulers of the Angkorian times (Ovesen 2005). As Hinton argues, until the Khmer Rouge came to power, the two cultural models had coexisted in separate spheres, but under Democratic Kampuchea, “the violent ethic was legitimated in everyday communal interactions,” thus allowing for the sheer, debilitating violence that became the genocide (Ovesen 2005:32). Ovesen (2005) also emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural frameworks, for the Khmer conception of power does not come with the baggage of good and evil as it does

in the West; rather than power being subject to morality, as Anderson notes, power is awarded through divine ordination. Those with power act however they desire, “because this is what power permits you to do. And if you cannot any longer act as you please, it is a sign that you have lost your power” (Ovesen 2005:34). Ovesen uses this cultural view of absolute power to argue that “violent acts committed with impunity by politicians or their hired hands come as no surprise to anybody,” and therefore, the four years of genocide should be regarded in the context of the rest of Cambodia’s violent, power struggle-filled history (2005:36).

Section II

April 1994 marked the formation of the Shante Sena Forestry Association in Cambodia (Ghosananda 1995). This Peace Army’s goal was to carefully train 30 volunteers; to develop “their hearts before we develop anything else”; and to teach them Buddhist meditation so as to “help cultivate concentration as a solid foundation upon which to build ecological teachings and nonviolence techniques” (Teng 1994). The curriculum was designed such that the participants learned both compassion and wisdom, for “if they only develop compassion and inner strength without technical expertise regarding forest preservation, they ... may actually cause harm” (Teng 1994). “The training period for the Shante Sena volunteers is very important,” for the idea behind the movement was founded upon personal change and growth (Teng 1994). The Shante Sena movement exemplifies an attempt at shifting one’s cosmology. Examining the significance of this movement — and of the Dhammayietra peace marches — requires not a framework of environmental security but rather a culturally-infused awareness of the situation that can appreciate different ontologies: a theoretical model that allows us to examine Maha Ghosananda’s efforts in Cambodia. I propose we will be more fruitful if we use the critical lens of Gregory Bateson’s to examine the escalation and possible resolution of conflict.

Gregory Bateson’s consciousness in cybernetics

Gregory Bateson’s *Steps to An Ecology of Mind* (2000) explores the role of consciousness in regarding nature, cultural adaptation, and ecological crisis. Cybernetics outlines systems that are interconnected, that have feedback loops allowing for self-correction, and that may also be jeopardized to the point where self-corrective measures fail as a result of human meddling (2000:447), as Bateson feels is the case with the imbalance today: pushed to the point that “we cannot trust Nature not to overcorrect” (2000:500). When we attempt to understand and explain these cybernetic systems, Bateson draws a distinction between purposive thought and systemic wisdom, between consciousness and unconsciousness (2000:440).

Though all elements of the cybernetic system are interconnected, any analysis or conscious examination of the processes at work *requires* making the assumption that a change in a particular aspect of one’s life will not completely alter another aspect; there are so many interconnections that it is impossible to explain relations without over-simplifying the system.² Here lie the limits to purposive thought and conscious understanding.

There are three causes of crises for Bateson: technological progress, population growth, and errors in the values of Occidental culture (2000:498). Though one may take issue with

what Bateson means by the third factor of conflict, our cultural world-view of purposeful consciousness has always been around, he argues, and never has the technology been as effective in allowing for the apparent success of purpose-driven thought (2000:440). He argues that the Industrial Revolution has shifted our world-view.

Bateson's consciousness is purpose-driven and is a "short-cut device to enable you to get quickly at what you want; not to act with maximum wisdom in order to live, but to follow the shortest logical or causal path" to get whatever it is you desire most (2000:439). The hubris associated with this is the assumption that we know what is best for us. Perhaps the biggest flaw with this assumption is that we desire that which is best for us.

Take the Green Revolution, for example, where we were driven to maximize surplus instead of being driven by awareness of our limitations; instead of accepting both abundance and scarcity as a matter of course, we strove to produce the highest-yielding varieties (Dove and Kammen 1997:98). As scholars have argued, environmental crisis can be furthered by both the pride associated with and the drive for maximizing output and technology (see Bateson 2000; Dove and Kammen 1997).

Bateson is criticized for presuming a homeostatic culture and a balanced world, an assumption that, as Michael Dove and Carol Carpenter explain, has long since been discredited in anthropology (2008:60). Bateson juxtaposes "undisturbed systems" (2000:436) with the "balanced ecological system" (2000:437). Undisturbed systems are those unaffected by humans, and for which the only exponentially diverging variable is a species' population; balanced ecological systems, on the other hand, are those for which any human-induced disturbance will disrupt the equilibrium into exponential change. Whether the system resettles upon another point of equilibrium or whether it goes beyond "the point of no return" depends upon which factors and feedbacks affect the changing variable (2000:437). Academic interest in the study of disaster including famine, deforestation, climate change, floods, etc. has shifted from premising societal equilibria to disequilibria (Dove 2014; Dove and Carpenter 2008). The new view of disequilibrium, that Scones terms as "new ecology" (Dove and Carpenter 2008:20), emphasizes the role of disturbances in society and underscores the existence of "dynamic, historical, and partly unknowable relationships between society and environment" (2008:20). Thus, recent environmental anthropological scholarship, including anthropological literature on weather and climate change (Dove 2014; Low and Hsu 2007; Strauss and Orlove 2003), takes changing systems as foundational, thereby unsettling Bateson's premise of balanced ecological systems.

But there is simultaneously a subtlety to Bateson's use of homeostasis, for Bateson justifies his premise of homeostasis. He explains that if we follow a system based upon conscious purpose, as most of us do today, "emergency is present or only just around the corner" (Bateson 2000:442), implying that an otherwise homeostatic system appears to be filled with emergencies (or disturbances) because we view the homeostatic system with purposive consciousness. Thus this framework is not incompatible with modern anthropological criticism of homeostasis, especially with respect to natural disasters. That is, inevitable exponential changes appear like crises (or as a non-homeostatic system in constant flux) *only when* we premise control as a result of consciousness, of will. Rather, if we think within the cosmology of systemic wisdom, which Bateson defines as "the

knowledge of the larger interactive system — that system which, if left undisturbed, is likely to generate exponential curves of change” — then we are left with a very complex system. But, as Bateson explains, since we are observing it locally and not globally, we do not regard anything as a crisis; rather, it is merely the natural self-correcting course of the complex system.

Bateson’s solution to ecological crisis is humility or “systemic wisdom” (2000:452). This Batesonian sense of systemic wisdom is also broadly supported by recent scholarship in spiritual ecology, which examines the importance of environmental values and religious traditions in relation to today’s environmental crisis (Grim and Tucker 2014; Sponsel 2012). In both, there is an emphasis on the importance of world-views, and Bateson implies the need to change one’s own world-view. Even though Bateson discusses three specific causes of conflict, he does not believe that any reductions in technological and population growth will help at this point (2000:500). Rather, the power to fix the problematic nature of purposive consciousness lies with the individual. “Freud’s royal road to the unconscious” may have referred primarily to dreams, but Bateson feels that dreams, the creativity behind art, the perception thereof, and religion all bring out the unconscious in the individual (2000:444). His parallel between creativity and unconsciousness is something often discussed in the field of education.

A major drawback to Bateson’s framework, however, is the question of how to solve a problem if the cause lies beyond the immediate, local vicinity. How does Bateson propose humility as a solution to a problem whose cause may lie with an international demand for diamonds? Bateson’s solution of unconsciousness alone does not address this, and something more is needed.

For a possible solution, we turn here to a contemporary of Bateson’s: Walker Percy, an American writer who, like Bateson, was also interested in semiotics. Percy, in his 1975 essay, “The Loss of the Creature,” discusses the role of conscious theory and creativity for a student who discovers something new and is in a state of appreciation and wonder. Just as Bateson’s “purposive consciousness” seeps into the Percy’s student, the student’s consciousness of the discovery “cannot escape their consciousness of their consciousness” (Percy 1975:487). That is, since the education system we follow today trains us to be systematic and purposeful in our work, the moment of unconsciousness present in the creativity of discovery (and, as Bateson would say, the unconsciousness found in art, dreams, poetry, and religion) is instantaneously replaced with consciousness, thus negating the unconscious. Percy, too, acknowledges that Bateson’s unconsciousness is well-known “in the fantasy-consciousness of the popular arts” (1975:484).

Percy proposes a few solutions to how we can re-introduce awe in a student’s discovery, and one of them is relevant to expanding the aforementioned drawback to Bateson’s framework, namely how to relate consciousness/humility to problems enmeshed in non-local and international networks. The most helpful suggestion, for our purpose here, is the “dialectic movement that brings one back to the beaten track but at a level above it” (Percy 1975:483).³ That is, one is not only conscious of one’s discovery, but one is also aware of the context of the discovery in the world; one is aware of the limitations to this consciousness. Or, to translate it to other words, as Buddhism teaches, one practices mindfulness.

Buddhist mindfulness versus Batesonian consciousness

The *Merriam-Webster Online English Dictionary* defines “Mindfulness: the practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis; also: such a state of awareness.”⁴ Mindfulness is being aware of being aware. It is very different from Percy’s consciousness of the unconscious or from Bateson’s consciousness. The dictionary’s primary definition of consciousness is:

1. a : the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself
- b : the state or fact of being conscious of an external object, state, or fact
- c : awareness; especially: concern for some social or political cause.⁵

Consciousness here necessarily centers on something — like being conscious “of something within oneself” or “of an external object.” This is similar to Bateson’s use: for example, being conscious of how certain systems in the world function; being conscious of the environment as an external thing; and being conscious of the role that resources play in our world. Mindfulness, on the other hand, is the state of awareness of the conscious; it is what Percy terms “at a level above [consciousness of the discovery]” (Percy 1975:483). The Shante Sena teaches that meditation allows for mindfulness, for “meditation enables us to be aware of the effects of our actions, including those destructive to our environment” (Teng 1994). Mindfulness is that which enables us to understand the limits to our consciousness, and it necessarily involves humility.

The mindfulness that Maha Ghosananda teaches transcends Bateson’s consciousness argument’s inability to explain phenomena whose causes lie beyond the immediate and local. Bateson’s solution of acting unconsciously does not address this, for mere unconsciousness cannot be aware of global implications. Rather, the way the Shante Sena was structured, and the way Maha Ghosananda’s Dhammayietra was conducted, exemplifies an astute awareness of local politics and international actors (Poethig 2004:210). At the same time, the world-view is not “conscious” of “resources” in the way that Thomas Homer-Dixon (1991) and James Fairhead (2001) were. Rather, the Buddhist teachings of mindfulness entail regarding the forests and trees with reverence, for the dichotomy between man and nature as owner and resource is blurred.

This blurring of the boundary between nature-as-resource and man-as-owner evokes one of the theoretical foundations of anthropology: questioning the validity of the *nature–culture dichotomy*. Anthropology recognizes that Western societies, to generalize here, tend to regard nature as distinct from culture. However, this is not a universal distinction, nor are “nature” and “culture” necessary valid or distinct categories even when they are used “in the west” (see Dove and Carpenter 2008:2–12; Strathern 1980). Environmental anthropology in particular “sits astride the dichotomy between nature and culture, a conceptual separation between categories of nature, like wilderness and parks, and those of culture, like farms and cities” (Dove and Carpenter 2008:2). William Cronon (1996) unsettles the Western presumption of “nature” particularly eloquently in his essay, “The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” He suggests that we tend to romanticize and exoticize the far-away and elusive “nature,” thereby discrediting the everyday and mundane; this can actually be quite unfair. For instance, the false narratives

of “wild” and “nature” can disempower indigenous peoples who have been interacting with and managing (what an outsider might mistakenly term) “wild” landscapes for centuries (1996:15-16). It can render both these people and the land “ahistorical,” thereby stripping away their agency and authority as historical actors: the romanticism dangerously presumes a static world (Cronon 1996:19-20; Fairhead and Leach 2008). Many of the anthropological examples that unsettle the nature-culture dualism come out of literature on conservation and development conflicts (see Fairhead and Leach 2008; Robbins 2012). Beyond unsettling the dichotomy, anthropological contributions have also sought new ways of constructively moving beyond the dualism (see Descola 2013; Descola and Pálsson 1996).

All this theory relates to finding different ways of conceptualizing a human-being’s relationship to the rest of the world, for we cannot take “nature” and “culture”; this can be viewed, as I do in this essay, through the lens of human-and-tree. As Bateson himself explains, Martin Buber’s “I-It” relationship, so characteristic of placing more importance upon purpose than upon love, between man and tree becomes an “I-Thou” relationship between man and tree (Bateson 2000:452).

Given this, there are a few more things to further explore: what does it mean to show reverence to a tree or to a forest? How precisely was the Dhammayietra performed and what was taught? And in what ways did the Dhammayietra demonstrate awareness of international and domestic politics and players?

Section III

Reverence and murder

To *revere* is “to have great respect for (someone or something): to show devotion and honor to (someone or something).”⁶ Reverence is an example of Buber’s “I-Thou” relationship; this is regarding a tree as one would regard a monk or a minister. What happens when one loses reverence for something? Drawing inspiration from Christopher D. Stone’s introduction and Garrett Hardin’s foreword in *Should Trees Have Standing?* (1974), I argue that a lack of reverence is what allows for violence. However, we do not call it murder if we fail to revere. Hardin (1974) and Stone (1974) explain a similar argument using *legal standing* instead of *reverence*. Slaves were once without *legal standing*, Hardin (1974) explains, and illustrates this by the example of Ancient Greece, where it was once not considered a crime to murder a slave. In the Greek Classics, when Odysseus returns from Troy, he executes a dozen slave girls; yet Hardin (1974:x) argues, one cannot conclude from this episode that Ancient Greece was completely devoid of any moral code (the argument goes that fidelity, a different form of moral code, was important there; Odysseus’ wife remained faithful to him during his long absence). Thus, according to Hardin, the violence of Odysseus executing a dozen slaves is less an issue of *morality* and more one of *standing*. Odysseus’ slaves, in that time period, were not granted the same legal standing as other humans were, like Odysseus and his wife. Humanity and personhood were limited to certain humans, and since certain humans were not granted standing, their lives were not revered as much as other humans’ lives.

There are many parallels between current anthropological enquiries into personhood and both this particular Greek example and the general argument by Stone (1974) and Hardin (1974) in *Should Trees Have Standing?* In post-human anthropology (much of which

has come out of thinking with the environment and finding ways to re-theorize nature and culture as explained above), the personhood of non-human beings is taken seriously. Many anthropologists find ways of theorizing seriously the aliveness of animals, trees, and even matter itself (see Barad 2003; Bennett 2010; Ingold 2007, 2013; Kohn 2007, 2013; Latour 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Whether this type of reverence to more forms of life is termed ‘agency,’ ‘standing,’ or ‘aliveness,’ there are similarities between these current theoretical approaches in anthropology and the questions in the legal sphere raised by Stone and Hardin (1974)

Regardless of what words and theoretical framework one chooses to use, there is a quality of reverence involved, I argue, and that only with reverence and only with valuing life are murder and violence prevented. Maha Ghosananda’s teacher, Nichidatsu, warned that murder “is the greatest tragedy of all tragedies in the human world” (Bhikkhu 2009:29), and the only prohibition to murder was cherishing the value of life, as “true spirituality” teaches (Bhikkhu 2009:29).

Further, it is the prohibition of murder that makes us civilized and human; and since reverence is what prohibits murder (Hardin 1974; Stone 1974), it is reverence that ties society together, for “this fundamental prohibition of murder is the basis for ultimate civilization of humanity” (Bhikkhu 2009:29). Without reverence (for family, for other humans, for all life), what cause is there not to murder everything to the point of extinction? Nichidatsu taught that the fundamental prohibition of murder “is the ultimate issue that must be addressed in order to deliver humanity from its otherwise potential of extinction” (Bhikkhu 2009:29).

Reverence can thus be used for peace building, since reverence prevents murder. The Buddha apparently once prevented war from breaking out by walking onto a battlefield (Bhikkhu 2009:47). Two relatives of his were fighting over access to the Rohini River during a time of drought. Just as the war was about to start, the Buddha asked his relatives which had more value: blood or water, and when they responded with blood, he said, “for the sake of some water, which is of little value, you should not destroy human lives, which are of so much greater value and priceless” (Bhikkhu 2009:47). Similarly, some believe that Maha Ghosananda prevented violence from breaking out at a refugee camp in the early 80s by asking all adult members, former Khmer Rouge soldiers included, to adopt the Eight Precepts of Buddhism (not killing humans, animals, anything; not taking another’s property, etc. — acts that show reverence) for a single day (Bhikkhu 2009:40).

The call, then, is for *how to shift* what a particular society values. Perhaps it appears like a question of proselytizing—but it is more careful a question than simply that; it is a question of how to engage and apply this academic reflection towards peace-building efforts. The question thus becomes one of how to shift a view from, for instance, using a tree as a resource to one of practicing reverence or giving a tree standing.

Shifting our ‘ethic’: An example of trees and standing

The issue of a tree having “rights” in the modern sense of the word first arose in the 1972 law case of *Sierra Club v. Morton* (Hardin 1974:xiii). The Supreme Court ruled that Sierra Club did not have the standing to sue on behalf of the valley; rather, United States Supreme Court Justice Douglas re-framed the entire debate as a very simple one: if

Mineral King, the valley, had been granted its own *legal standing*, then the case could be considered (Stone 1974:73). This harkens once more to recent anthropological reflections on personhood, as mentioned earlier.

Giving non-human objects standing and considering the personhood of more-than-human beings is currently an important question in anthropology (see De la Cadena 2010; Kirksey & Helmreich 2010; Tsing 2011). The legal dimension of this question is something also addressed in Christopher Stone's introduction to *Should Trees Have Standing?* (1974:8). For law to be stable, it must be based off of ethics, and when ethics change, so then does the law change (Hardin 1974:xii). Stone explains why it appears laughable to consider a tree to have standing (or why it was once laughable to entertain women's legal rights), for "until the right-less thing receives its rights, we cannot see it as anything but a *thing* for the use of 'us' — those who are holding the rights at the time" (Stone 1974:8). Perhaps the closest of the historical paradigm shifts to that of giving a tree standing is giving a fetus standing. Stone notes, for instance, that when a society fails to revere infants, infanticide can be widespread (1974:3). Even today, there remains disagreement about whether a fetus is to be revered as human life or not, as evidenced in the presence of abortion debates. If it is revered as human, then it is treated differently. But the present Occidental ethic, as Stone (1974) explains, sees a fundamental difference between the fetus and the tree, in that the fetus eventually becomes a human while the tree does not. Now, if the ethic is regarding all life as equal, as Buddhist philosophy does (Teng 1994), then giving a tree standing is not as laughable an idea as it may seem.

The first aspect of giving a tree legal standing is to give it legal-operational rights (Stone 1974:11). If a stream that is being polluted by a corporation has no legal standing and the individual cost to each independent landowner is too low for the landowners to individually file a suit, the problem is resolved if the stream, like the corporation, is its own legal entity; then, a guardian acting on behalf of the tree may file the law suit, and this ability to stand in court as a separate legal entity is part of Stone's definition of legal-operational rights (1974:12).

The second aspect is giving the tree psychic/socio-psychic rights (Stone 1974). This aspect illuminates the fact that law follows our ethic; giving a tree legal standing would reflect a change from the view that nature exists for the sole purpose of satisfying man. However, Stone warns against placing one's faith blindly in a change of environmental consciousness, for curbing the degradation due to population growth and other needs via legal and economic means is needed in addition (Stone 1974:47). Environmental consciousness alone cannot reverse any adverse processes, for, as Murphy explains, despite beliefs in the Taoist conception of unity, "ruthless deforestation has been continuous" in China (Stone 1974:47). Instead of trying to erase a nature-culture dichotomy and change our consciousness, we should strive to give trees legal standing — but "whether we will be able to bring about the requisite institutional and population growth changes depends in part upon effecting a radical shift in our feelings about 'our' place in the rest of Nature" (Stone 1974:48). Changes in legal conceptions mirror changes in our world-view or myth, and if the Supreme Court were to award standing to a tree, it "will contribute to a change in popular consciousness" (1974:53).

Recalling Bateson's inability to address how a shift from conscious to unconscious would allow us to understand problems whose roots lie in the international domain, Stone addresses this by stressing that a shift in ethic to Taoist or Pantheist teachings alone is insufficient; we must also carry this ethic into the legal and economic spheres (1974:51).

However, returning to an older world-view such as "pantheism, Shinto, and Tao ... are all, each in its own fashion, quaint, primitive, and archaic" (Stone 1974:51); rather, a more helpful world-view would be one that encompasses all of modern, scientific knowledge — a myth that uses recent discoveries in "geophysics, biology, and the cosmos" (1974:51). The solution Stone proposes is a world-view that regards the earth as a highly complex system, as its own organism even (1974:53). This is reminiscent of scholarship that comments on the relevance of pan-global religious ethics for the environment, coming out of the field of Religion and Ecology, such as Brian Swimme's and Mary Evelyn Tucker's (2011) *Journey of the Universe* and the connections drawn to James Lovelock's Gaia Hypothesis (Swimme and Tucker 2011), and other similar work (see Grim and Tucker 2014; Tucker 2003).

Regardless of whether a more pan-global ethic is possible or desirable, it is certainly clear from Stone and Hardin (1974) that giving a tree standing fundamentally requires a particular group of people to undergo a shift in ethic. While Stone underscores the importance of carrying this ethic out in the legal sphere, and though Stone warns against returning to an "archaic" ethic (Stone 1974:51), there is little doubt that a society's ethic is continually changing, and molding its direction of change can help implement practical policy that not only copes with the current environmental condition but also helps build a world of peace.

Sacred spaces

There is a clear relation between reverence and the sacred. The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* lists the synonyms of reverence as "adore, deify, glorify, revere, worship, venerate," most of which are words that imply the sacred or divine.⁷ An awareness of interdependence creates respect and reverence, and a non-legal-operational way of promoting this reverence is by creating sacred spaces. That is, while Stone (1974) implies that a shift in world-view and consciousness is insufficient, Bateson (2000) implies that a shift in ethic is *precisely what we need*. Stone says that what we need is a shift in ethic, but we *also* require a shift in legal and economic terms of thinking (1974). While it may very well be the case that Stone's legal shifts might propel the shifting ethic, how else can the ethic be changed; what other ways are there of "creating consciousness"? My suspicion is that creating sacred spaces may well do this. Therefore, we return to Cambodia to consider Maha Ghosananda and how to create sacred spaces.

As part of the effort to re-teach Buddhism, Maha Ghosananda and the Shante Sena sanctified, or imparted sacredness to, the forest (Teng 1994). The Shante Sena's goals included re-forestation and creating a "meditation forest" in the Svay Rieng province. They also wished to "encourage the villagers to appreciate the value of the forest and understand the importance of protecting the forest" (Teng 1994). This sanctification taught reverence, and this creation of sacred space was used as a method of peace building. While this may have had the unintended consequence of creating a mental divide between the sacred

forest and the common tree, Maha Ghosananda *ordained the common tree as sacred* and taught the villagers to treat it as they would a monk. William Cronon warns that we in the West have long since turned the concept of wilderness into the sacred; we have imparted upon it mystical qualities, and we now fail to realize that a tree in a mystical grove in the forest is the same as a tree in our backyard (1996). The creation of a separate meditation forest and the protection of the forest may sound like Cronon's caveat of creating the sacred and forgetting the common. In the Dong Yai forest in Buriram, Thailand, for example:

Villagers are struggling to protect the province's last rain-catchment forest from illegal loggers and the government's plan to initiate commercial eucalyptus plantations. They have held 'tree ordinations,' tying yellow robes around sacred trees and white ones around the whole forest [Teng 1994]

Ordaining a tree is regarding the tree *itself* with the same respect as one regards a monk with; it is not having a monk standing in the way of the logger and the tree. It is an attempt to create an environmental consciousness — not an attempt to produce a legal block between logger and tree. This is the same distinction that Stone draws between a new ethic versus a legal change (Stone 1974:53); the two feed into each other, but the ethic is vital for progress, just as sanctifying the tree is necessary to legally defend it.

Cronon's (1996) warning of creating a separate sacred space is heeded by Maha Ghosananda and the Shante Sena (Bhikkhu 2009; Teng 1994). While the creation of a separate meditation forest may resemble the mystical grove that Cronon warns against, ordaining an average tree in every village is more an attempt to create a sacred space out of the regular — not isolating the sacred far away into the wilderness. The Shante Sena volunteers were trained in "Buddhist meditation to help cultivate concentration as a solid foundation upon which to build ecology teachings and nonviolence techniques" (Teng 1994), for Buddhist teachings do not merely sanctify the wilderness. Rather, they "emphasize respecting ... plants, animals, and minerals" (Teng 1994). The Buddhist doctrine of regarding the ordinary and everyday as sacred parallels Bateson's idea of operating in the unconscious. Instead of creating a separation between human and sacred, and instead of drawing a line between nature and culture, mindfulness of one's environment stimulates sanctification thereof.

Section IV

Monks and politics: What it means to walk

There are different aspects to what peace marches signify. Some scholars view it as a form of peaceful warfare (Richards 2005:4), which is in sync with the literal translation of Shante Sena: Peace Army. This expression was first coined by Mahatma Gandhi, whose famous salt march was an "implied rejection of the technological developments that had enslaved India and that led to world wars and atomic nuclear conflagrations" (Bhikkhu 2009:29). Maha Ghosananda's teacher, Nichidatsu, had also been a friend of Gandhi's, and he taught Maha Ghosananda the importance of a monk walking amidst the people on a

daily basis, for it provided a “face-to-face encounter with the common people” (Bhikkhu 2009:29). Nichidatsu had learned the importance of walking from a Japanese Buddhist ascetic walking tradition, *kaihogyo*, where he spent:

a thousand days walking in the mountains of Japan, beating a drum and chanting. He would routinely walk 40 kilometers in a day. ‘The true monk does not stay in one place,’ he taught Ghosananda. The Cambodian Theravada tradition embraced a similar practice, known as *thudong*, in which the monk spends a good part of his life walking the forests, practicing meditation in imitation of the Buddha. [Bhikkhu 2009:29]

Two decades later, Maha Ghosananda walked among his people as a means to re-teach and restore Cambodian Buddhism (Bhikkhu 2009:30).

Though the peace marches clearly had non-Khmer influences such as Nichidatsu’s and Gandhi’s, the case can also be made that walking as a form of creating peace is a fundamentally Buddhist concept. Firstly, walking meditation is one of the oldest forms of Buddhist meditation, for the Buddha himself taught walking meditation in the *Great Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness* (Silanada 1996). While sitting meditation involves focusing on the breath and withdrawing oneself to some degree, walking meditation requires focusing on each step and being mindful of the outside world. In this regard, what is more perfect to teach mindfulness to the Cambodian people of the outside world than walking meditation? Secondly, if the Buddha prevented a war between his relatives over rights to the use of water by walking onto the battlefield, the Dhammayietra is merely following in the Buddha’s footsteps (Bhikkhu 2009:47). During the Dhammayietra, Maha Ghosananda, the monks, and the laypeople who joined them, did something similar by walking through active war zones, areas filled with land-mines, and by even getting caught in the crossfire until both the government troops and the Khmer Rouge rebels apologized to the monks (Bhikkhu 2009:58). As Maha Ghosananda said, “Peace is growing in Cambodia, slowly, step by step ... Each step is a meditation. Each step is a prayer” (Poethig 2004:198).

Monks and politics: Political involvement and transnationalism

But even if the idea of Buddhist walking meditation inspired the Dhammayietra, how politically motivated was the Dhammayietra? Maha Ghosananda expressed that:

The Dhammayietra was not a political demonstration or some new innovation into Cambodian Buddhism; it was simply following the example of the Buddha, who had long ago walked onto the battle field in an effort to end a war, and bring reconciliation to two hostile factions of his own clan. [Bhikkhu 2009:46]

Yet Maha Ghosananda’s walk was inspired by Nichidatsu, who had certainly been friends with Gandhi (Bhikkhu 2009:46). Similar walks (e.g. Gandhi’s famous salt march) have been conducted with a clear political agenda. Monks in Cambodia have historically been politically involved to varying degrees.

Theologically, there is one school of thought that instructs monks to be disengaged from politics; there are two dimensions to the wheel that represents Buddhist thoughts

on life: one is the political/national sphere, and the other is the personal sphere (Sam 1987:40). Regardless — or perhaps because of this separation — monks who do not appear politically active are trusted by the people (Sam 1987:90), sometimes even more than politicians and kings are. It is unsurprising that monks are trusted more than politicians and kings are — not simply because they are supposedly politically less-involved but also because they do not wield violence and power in the same way that politicians wield it (see Ovesen 2005). Regardless, the revolution that placed the Khmer Rouge in power would have been impossible without support from some groups of monks (Bhikkhu 2009:35-36):

As Khmer Rouge forces entered the city, Supreme Patriarch Huot Tat went onto Phnom Penh radio and asked the military to lay down their weapons. Huot Tat was one of Ghosananda's teachers when Ghosananda was a young monk. 'The war was over,' Huot Tat said. 'Peace had come to Cambodia.' After the radio address, he returned to the temple at Onaloum Pagoda where he was taken into custody. [Bhikkhu 2009:35]

The next day, he was executed by the Khmer Rouge, allegedly crushed by a bulldozer (Bhikkhu 2009:36). Given the trust that Khmer people held for the monks, it is unlikely that the military would have laid down their weapons unless the Supreme Patriarch of the country had asked them to; and the Khmer Rouge would probably not have received as much support from the people if some of the monks had not supported them.

The term “socially engaged Buddhism” may have been coined by Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, during the Vietnam War (Poethig 2004:198), but, as Maha Ghosananda argues, the first act of socially engaged Buddhism was performed by the Buddha himself when he stepped onto the battlefield (Poethig 2004:202). Maha Ghosananda argues that the Buddha's act as a conflict mediator should encourage other Buddhists “to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience that are filled with suffering” (Poethig 2004:202).

The Dhammayietra was successful locally because it “looked Khmer” in addition to being themed around relevant social issues and placing emphasis upon “self-disciplined nonviolence and meditation” (Poethig 2004:208). As Kathryn Poethig explains, it appeared Khmer because it was “perceived as a reconstruction of the pre-revolution Khmer moral order” (2004:208).

However, the transnational and international support that it garnered belie the purely Khmer façade, for engaged Buddhism of this sort has always been transnational in nature (Poethig 2004:209). Firstly, Poethig argues that the philosophy preached is not particularly Khmer in origin; it may be based upon Buddhist philosophy, but this is philosophy that was also preached by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other peace activists. Further, the amount of NGO and international support the Dhammayietra and the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation received discloses the expatriate support: a challenge to the “notion that ‘local’ movements, especially in the South, can be unhampered by ‘global’ interests” (Poethig 2004:210).

It is precisely the international and transnational dimensions of the Dhammayietra and the other Buddhist conflict mediation attempts that explain why these attempts are successful. Without the international perspective coupled with the local, Buddhist

and Khmer image, these attempts would fall prey to the same problem with Bateson's framework: addressing international causes of conflict within a localized world-view. The careful planning of the Dhammayietra and the Shante Sena in presenting themselves as local movements, even while the organizers were well-aware of international dimensions, exemplifies not Bateson's consciousness but rather Buddhist mindfulness.

Concluding thoughts

This transnational religious movement is reflective of the shifting ethic; it is "part of the trend towards an increasingly global civil society in which political moralities (such as non-violent approaches to civil conflict) are transmitted by transnational religions" (Poethig 2004:199). It is part of Stone's and Douglas' defense of giving trees standing.

In the post-Khmer-Rouge era, the monk-led and internationally-supported efforts at peace-building and nation-building fostered mindfulness within the people. Meditation was promoted through walking; forgiveness of and love to the oppressor were preached. The Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation carefully planned these transnational movements and presented them as Khmer ones. This went a step beyond Bateson's framework; the unconscious was replaced with awareness of the conscious. This mindfulness in turn promoted reverence by creating sacred spaces out of the ordinary.

Mindfulness as a concept offers something more — something more than consciousness does — that allows us to deal better with the infinite complexity of the world. If we presume consciousness and if we attempt manipulating the environment or society to get whatever we desire for the world or whatever we think is best for the world, we may risk perpetrating the same violence. If we wish to use a system of purposive consciousness, we must incorporate the environment into the legal-economic framework, as Stone suggests (1974:29). It is imperative to be aware (mindful) of our cultural assumptions — so that we may heed any limitations to our assumptions.

I recently walked into a bookstore and picked up Shel Silverstein's (1986) *The Giving Tree*, a beautifully-illustrated story about a boy who grew up with a tree; the boy kept returning to the tree, which was elated to see the boy and give him whatever it could, to provide for his material needs: apples, branches, wood, etc., so that the boy could become rich, travel widely, and retire happily. The concluding moral in the book was that when the boy was finally too old to pursue material gains, he sat on the stump of the tree, and they were both happy together (Silverstein 1986). I was initially excited to see the relationship between man and tree, and between man and nature; but the book progressed: the tree was so willingly subdued, the ungrateful boy continued taking what he could from the tree, and the book left me with a colonial aftertaste. Yet the boy was not entirely stewarding the tree; the tree chose to protect the boy and give him whatever he desired. Silverstein created a tension between man's stewardship of the environment and a generously-giving environment, and I had naïvely assumed the tension would be resolved by erasing the nature-culture dichotomy. But when Venerable Phrachak, a world-renowned monk said:

We must learn that the forest is life itself. We must learn that we are the same as the leaves, no more important, no less important. We must allow the leaves, the

branches, the bats to be our teachers ... Monks need the forest as fish need water.
[Teng 1994]

I realized there was indeed a nature-culture dichotomy here too. The problem, however, is not the dichotomy. The solution to this tension lies not with whether we premise a dichotomy between man and nature — but rather with whether we take apples from a tree as a resource or whether we are sincerely grateful to the tree for what it chooses to provide us with; whether it is “arboricide” to kill a tree; whether we regard the tree as a fellow living-being and with reverence; and whether we revere — and are mindful of — what we view as nature.

Notes

- 1 This essay was first written at Yale in 2009 for an undergraduate Environmental Anthropology seminar, taught by Prof. Michael R. Dove. This class and essay were my introduction to anthropology, and while my thinking has since grown, I have chosen to keep the structure and argument of this essay largely unchanged; some of the sources might also be older for this reason.
- 2 Bateson does not explicitly claim this; however, I would argue that his description of “ad hoc measures” and the DDT example indicate this (see Bateson 1970:497)
- 3 By “consciousness of the discovery,” Percy means, if I read him correctly, the same as what Bateson terms “unconscious”; Percy’s “consciousness of the consciousness” is what Bateson calls “consciousness.”
- 4 Merriam-Webster Online, under the word “mindfulness,” <http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/mindfulness>, accessed April 4, 2015.
- 5 Merriam-Webster Online, under the word “consciousness,” <http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/consciousness>, accessed April 4, 2015.
- 6 Merriam-Webster Online, under the word “revere,” <http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/revere>, accessed April 4, 2015.
- 7 Merriam-Webster Online, under the word “reverence,” <http://www.meriam-webster.com/dictionary/reverence>, accessed April 4, 2015.

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The Abnormalcy of Everyday Life

Belgrade youth and the legacy of the 1990s in the context of European Union expansion

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This article explores how the eastward expansion of the European Union (EU) affects the lives and identities of youth in Belgrade, Serbia, a post-socialist, post-conflict, non-EU country. This study involved qualitative interviews with 17 participants (university students) aged 20 to 30, a generation that grew up during the 1990s when the Yugoslav secession wars left Serbia isolated from western Europe politically and economically. I explore how urban, educated, Serbian youth mark themselves as European relative to other segments of Serbian society and through this positioning disassociate themselves from responsibility for the violence and instability of the 1990s. Using the lens of abnormalcy discourse in post-conflict and post-socialist settings, I also consider the tension between belonging and exclusion that marks the experience of growing up in the shadow of the 1990s.

KEY WORDS 1990s, abnormalcy discourse, Belgrade, European Union, Serbia, youth

The borders of the European Union (EU) have been extending east for the last decade, and an ever-smaller number of countries in Europe now find themselves on the periphery of this border. While most of the focus on European integration has been about the elimination of borders between nations and the building of a united Europe, the other side of this process has been the securing of borders outside the EU and the creation of new borderlands within Europe (Szmagalska-Follis 2009; Virkunnen 2001). More recently, these spaces on the EU's "immediate outside" (Jansen 2009:819) have been receiving more academic attention, as the expanding EU border regime is seen to affect the everyday experiences and identities of non-EU citizens (Greenberg 2010; Jansen 2009; Szmagalska-Follis 2009).

This article has been adapted from my master's thesis and is based on my graduate ethnographic fieldwork in Belgrade, the capital city of Serbia, an EU candidate state. Conducted over a six-week period in April and May 2013, this research involved qualitative interviews conducted in the Serbian language with university students aged 20 to 30. In the first part of this article, I position Serbia as a non-EU state in Europe in the context of recent history, namely Serbia's role as aggressor in the Yugoslav secession wars of the 1990s. The "1990s" have become shorthand for describing a decade marked by then-President Milošević's ultra-nationalist politics that ravaged Serbia's economy,

infrastructure, and political relationships. I argue that for participants of this study, the prospect of EU membership symbolizes a move away from Serbia's violent past, and fulfills a desire to be included in the cultural space of Europe after growing up in relative isolation. I explore how urban, educated, Serbian youth mark themselves as European relative to other segments of Serbian society and through this positioning disassociate themselves from responsibility for the violence and instability of the 1990s.

In the second part of this article, I offer an analysis of participants' use of abnormalcy discourse regarding everyday life in Belgrade in order to demonstrate how the legacy of the 1990s continues to affect the subjectivities of Serbian youth in the context of EU expansion. Depictions of Serbia as irreparably abnormal and corrupt after the 1990s are constructed in contrast to an idealized image of life in EU countries. I argue that through abnormalcy discourse, Serbian youth express a tension between European belonging and exclusion that marks the experience of growing up in the shadow of the 1990s.

In focusing on post-socialist youth, this article follows the lead of insightful anthropological research about how the 'normal life' is imagined and defined by young people in the context of democratization (Fehérváry 2002; Galbraith 2003; Greenberg 2011). In Serbia, youth perspectives on European integration deserve particular attention because young people are growing up in the legacy of the 1990s and possess a unique perspective on this decade having experienced it as children. While membership in the EU remains a distant goal in Serbia, it has dominated political discussion since the overthrow of President Milošević in 2000, and has been tied to ideas about Serbia reinventing itself politically, socially, and economically (Greenberg 2010, 2011; Subotić 2011). For Serbian youth who have grown up in this political climate, the question of EU integration seems to form the backdrop against which contemporary imaginings of Serbia are formed, articulated, and contested. Fourteen years after the overthrow of Milošević, it is important to explore not only what it might mean to join the EU, but also the practical and symbolic implications of what it means to be on the outside.

Positionality

My interest in this topic is not purely academic, since I was born in Belgrade and moved away in the early 1990s. In addition to being Serbian, I shared numerous traits with interview participants which made me something of an insider: age, class-position, urban identity (although not a proper 'BeograĐanka'), and university student. Taken together, I feel our shared traits helped relieve me of the position of "judging westerner" (Greenberg 2010:44) experienced by other researchers in the area. Participants generally assumed I was "on their side," and that I would write a flattering report. However, although I was not considered "judging," I was definitely considered a westerner. Participants tended to view me as rich, well-travelled, "on vacation" in Belgrade, and a citizen of a "normal," "well-functioning," and "orderly" country — if not utopia. Statements about how things do not function properly in Serbia were often compared explicitly with how the participant imagined my life in the West. Their wild imaginations about life in Canada (where there is no poverty or homelessness, and everybody lives in spacious downtown apartments and works fulfilling jobs) drove home a major point of inequality between me and the

participants: I had visited their country often, but they had never visited mine, and maybe never would. As Jansen points out regarding his fieldwork in Sarajevo, I was there by choice and could leave anytime, while participants had a much more complicated relationship with crossing the border (2009:815).

Part One: Serbia and the legacy of the 1990s

In order to understand Serbia's position outside the EU and the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion inherent in EU expansion processes, it is necessary to contextualize the country's EU aspirations in the context of its recent history. Serbia's relationship to the EU can be best understood by examining it as a post-war and post-socialist state. In the early 1990s when newly independent eastern European states were applying for EU membership, Yugoslavia was embroiled in a violent civil war. The "enormous country, all the way from Slovenia to Macedonia," as one research participant described it, had begun to unravel after the death of socialist leader Tito in 1980, and throughout the rise of ultra-nationalist authoritarian president Slobodan Milošević in the late 1980s.¹

Tito's Yugoslavia was a key member of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War. During this period, Yugoslavs proudly differentiated themselves from Eastern European states behind the Iron Curtain, since their softer version of socialism allowed them to enjoy relative freedom of travel and a decent relationship with Western European states (Todorova 1997; Ugrešić 1992). These "better days of Yugoslavia" (Todorova 1997:53) were a time of relative economic stability and peace between the six Yugoslav republics, as Tito enforced the politics of "weak Serbia – strong Yugoslavia" (Crnobrnja 1996:107) that held the country together. This period sits in sharp contrast to the period of that followed Tito's death, when nationalist sentiments grew across the country. As each Yugoslav republic, with the exception of Montenegro, declared its independence, Milošević's nationalist politics (coupled with those of Croatian president Franjo Tuđman) brought Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina into a 1991 to 1995 civil war characterized by war-crimes, ethnic cleansing, massive refugee flows, and genocide.

The United Nations (UN) and the EU responded to the war by imposing economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and visa restrictions. While the war was fought outside of Belgrade by both paramilitary troops and the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), the city was hurt by the lasting effects of the war: economic sanctions, capital flight, hyper-inflation, visa restrictions, Mafia-style corruption, and nationalist propaganda. In addition, Milošević's privatization policies in the early 1990s exacerbated the situation by creating high unemployment and putting money into the hands of a wealthy few (Gould and Sickner 2008). In 1999, the autonomous Serbian province of Kosovo declared its independence, which resulted in another war led by Milošević. The United States intervened through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing of Belgrade, and further sanctions were placed on Serbia by the international community.

Western media accounts supported by academic explanations of the wars depicted the Balkans as primitive, backwards, anti-Western, and non-European. Todorova shows how such a depiction taps into a long history of Balkanist discourse, characterized most notably by "the externalization of evil on an abstract Balkanness" (1997:47). Through this

discourse, which is explored in the section below, the Balkans are constructed as the other of Europe, and western Europe constructs its own superior image by opposition.

In a relatively short time, Belgrade went from being the capital of an internationally respected Yugoslavia to the capital of a war-torn pariah state. This dramatic shift in geopolitical position is manifest in the popular nostalgia toward the ‘red passport’ of Tito’s Yugoslavia, as it represents freedom of mobility and, by extension, certification of inclusion in the European community that the subsequent Serbian passport did not provide (Jansen 2009). EU visa restrictions placed on Serbia during the 1990s were kept in place until 2009, which further contributed to a sense of isolation within Europe (Greenberg 2010; Jansen 2009).

After the 1999 NATO bombing, public support for Milošević dropped dramatically, and in October 2000 he was overthrown and replaced with a coalition government. This marked a democratic turn in Serbian politics, and there was widespread optimism that Serbia would soon join the EU. However, the 2000s did not bring the quick accession people hoped for. Rather, it was a time of highly divisive politics between Western reformists, ultra-nationalists, and numerous others. Even with Milošević out of power, the legacy of the 1990s spread into the next decade in the form of a weakened economy, brain drain, compromised freedom of press, and corruption at every level of government (Stojić 2006).

Contemporary Serbian politics are still focused on a recovery from this decade, especially as Serbian EU accession hinges on certain additional conditions related to its role as aggressor in the Yugoslav wars. The most notable condition has been Serbia’s cooperation with the largely unpopular International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) through the extradition of war criminals, most of whom were high-ranking political figures in Milošević’s regime. Recognition of Kosovo’s independence is also widely perceived as an additional condition for EU membership, and this issue takes centre stage in right-wing anti-EU political campaigns asking voters to choose between Europe and Kosovo. Taken together, these issues contribute to a relatively high domestic opposition to Serbian EU integration. In 2012, when Serbia received official candidate status, opposition to joining the EU had climbed to 47 per cent of the surveyed population (Papović and Pejović 2012).

Contextualizing Serbia as a post-war, post-socialist, and even post-Yugoslav state is necessary for exploring the topic of EU integration for a number of reasons. First, it helps to clarify certain practical reasons why Serbia’s EU aspirations have been difficult to achieve. Most notable are the economic setbacks of consecutive wars and the additional EU membership conditions. Second, the imposed economic isolation of the 1990s and the 1999 NATO bombing of Belgrade are important for understanding Serbia’s complicated and sometimes hostile relationship with Western European states and institutions, even as it works toward EU membership. And most importantly, understanding Serbia’s current position outside the EU in the context of recent history is important because of the ongoing legacies of this history, both the “better days of Yugoslavia” (Todorova 1997:53) and its disintegration. This history informs understandings of Serbia’s geopolitical and symbolic position in Europe, which is crucial for understanding what it means to be Serbian, Balkan, or European. The relationship between these dynamic categories constitutes a “hierarchy

of multiple identities” (Todorova 1997:44) that is further complicated by the eastward expansion of the EU and the creation of new borderlands of inclusion and exclusion created by this process (Szmagalska-Follis 2009).

Serbia in the hierarchies of Europe

As an eastern European and Balkan country, Serbia occupies a space that has been theorized as peripheral and subordinate to western Europe, an ambiguous zone of cultural and economic exclusion separating western Europe from Asia (Todorova 1997; Wolff 1995). Analyzing the long-standing symbolic power of western Europe to stand for modernity, civilization, and progress, Todorova and Wolff demonstrate how through demi-orientalist and Balkanist discourse, western Europe constructs itself as Europe ‘proper’ while constructing eastern European and especially Balkan countries as the other of Europe. As Wolff describes it, eastern Europe is “within Europe but not fully European” (1995:9; see also Said 1979).

The unique position of the Balkans in Europe is often expressed poetically through the metaphor of bridge or crossroads: a state of permanent ambiguity and transition with one border to the east and one border to the west. Todorova writes that what is “disquieting” (1997:58) about this metaphor — apart from the premise that east and west are fundamentally and essentially opposed — is the perception that life on the bridge is abnormal, a stigma, “an intolerable state of existence” (58).

The discursive equation of western Europe with Europe ‘proper’ that Todorova and Wolff discuss has a parallel in the contemporary equation of the EU with Europe in both academic and political discourse. For example, Serbia’s EU aspirations are being hailed as the country’s “return to Europe” (Lindstrom 2003:313) after the isolation and violence of the 1990s. In Serbia, this framing is evident in pro-EU political slogans such as “*Idemo u Evropu!*” [Let’s go to Europe!], which problematically positions Serbia as literally outside of Europe, aspiring to get in. As these examples suggest, ‘Europe’ is not a static category defined by geography, but a culturally contested space, a shifting border that always includes some and excludes others.

To be a non-EU country in Europe is therefore to occupy a peripheral position in the symbolic hierarchies of Europe in a way that mirrors the historical othering of Balkan and eastern European countries. In the case of Serbia, European integration is framed as a move away from the backwardness and isolation of the Balkans and towards an idea of Europe as embodied by the EU: a cultural space symbolizing modernity, progress, and interdependence (Noutcheva 2009; Renner and Trauner 2009; Vachudova 2005). Academic explanations of Serbia’s difficulties in meeting EU accession requirements have pointed to its irreconcilably ‘Balkan’ identity and the supposed dichotomy between the Balkans and Europe (Ekiert, Kubik and Vachudova 2007; Lindstrom 2003; Subotić 2011).

As the EU has expanded eastward, it has encompassed states such as Poland or Hungary that were historically considered ‘eastern,’ as well as states that have historically been labeled ‘Balkan,’ such as Bulgaria and Romania. The eastward expansion of the EU therefore blurs and complicates the long-standing imagined hierarchies of Europe and suggests a new symbolic hierarchy between EU states and non-EU states. For example, writing



An EU information centre and dumpsters in downtown Belgrade.

PHOTO: JELENA GOLUBOVIC

about the inclusion of Poland in the EU and the securing of the Poland-Ukraine border, Szmagalska-Follis uses the concept of “new borderlands” (2009:397) to explore how Poland’s EU accession affected Ukrainian people’s identities and everyday experiences, especially considering that Ukrainians had previously enjoyed visa-free travel to Poland. As the hierarchies of Europe shift in relation with EU mobility and economic privileges, new borderlands are created between EU states and non-EU states that are characterized by a tense interplay between proximity and distance, affecting experiences and identities on an everyday level (Szmagalska-Follis 2009).

For this reason, the experience of living in a non-EU state in Europe has been theorized as being a very marginalizing experience (Jansen 2009; Szmagalska-Follis 2009). Writing about Serbia, Jansen argues that being on the outside of the EU is characterized by feelings of isolation and resentment, emotions which reveal a fear of not being recognized by others as having a “place in the world,” (2009:824) and a fear of being excluded to the point of literally “falling off” of the world.

Youth and urbanity as markers of European belonging

Most if not all participants of this study identified with the label ‘European.’ Given Serbia’s isolation from Europe throughout the 1990s and the discursive equation of the EU with Europe ‘proper’ discussed above, the participants’ self-understanding as belonging in Europe comes into tension with Serbia’s symbolic and geopolitical position outside of

the EU. Speaking about the pro-EU political slogan, “Let’s go to Europe!” Ivan, 29, said vehemently:²

Where are we, then? In Australia? Floating in the middle of the Pacific? It bothers me because it’s nonsense. Europe! Europe! — that’s not Europe. But people here talk like that quite often: ‘We are going to Europe.’ It’s not Europe! You are going to the European Union. You are going to join a partnership. You are going to join a firm, basically.

In this excerpt, Ivan takes issue with the equation of the EU with Europe because it introduces a set of symbolic, economic, or cultural criteria for inclusion that redefines who counts as ‘European’ in non-geographic terms, and in doing so excludes Serbia. Ivan compares the feeling of exclusion to being outcast “in the middle of the Pacific,” a metaphor which echoes Jansen’s (2009) argument that not having a place in the world amounts to a fear of literally falling off of the world. Ivan’s comments are effective in demonstrating how EU values and accession criteria are coming to define what being ‘European’ means in everyday speech in Belgrade. Echoing Wolff’s description of eastern Europe as “within Europe but not fully European” (1995:9), to be outside of the EU means to be perceived as not being truly or fully European.

In the following section, I explore how participants of this study stake claims to Europeanness through the markers of youth and urbanity.³ In exploring how self-identification as ‘European’ is meaningful to this group, it is important to remember that identity categories are dynamic, and to delve into a deeper understanding of what the marker ‘European’ means to this particular group at this particular time. Not only is the outside of the EU growing smaller as other Balkan or eastern European states are admitted into the EU, but youth in Serbia have grown up during a period of economic and physical isolation from the EU and from the West more generally, which affects how they perceive their relationship to the rest of Europe. For this reason, it is important to remember that these claims to Europeanness are made in the context of the EU’s expansion into eastern Europe and Serbia’s exclusion to date from this process.

Youth and Europeanness

Insightful qualitative research has pointed to the disconnect between how history is interpreted by youth who grew up in a post-war or post-socialist setting and how it is interpreted by older generations who lived through or directly experienced this history (Schwenkel 2011; Shore 2009; Marada 2007). Marada (2007) has argued that the end of communism was an event that intensified if not constituted a generational cleavage between those who experienced it directly and those who experienced it second-hand. Similarly, Shore has argued that “a few years suddenly mattered very much” (2009:110) in shaping youth perspectives or understandings of intense historical events and changes such as the end of communism.

Serbian youth have been singled out as a unique ‘war generation’ by studies in various fields including sociology, anthropology, psychology, policy studies, and even literature, since they grew up in the 1990s, a period sometimes characterized as a moral vacuum

without role models to look up to in the public sphere (Greenberg 2011:94). According to Greenberg, a defining aspect of this generation is that it tends to distance itself from responsibility for the violence and instability of the 1990s, since its members were too young to be involved in political decision-making processes (2011:96). In a similar vein, in her research on generational cleavages after the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and Poland, Shore argues that age affects who is perceived as “old enough to be held responsible” (2009:327) for harmful communist legacies. She further argues that youth who had no direct memories of the communist regime tended to discuss its negative qualities with an unfounded sense of self-confidence that they or their generation would not have made the same moral compromises as the previous generations had.

Consistent with Greenberg (2011) and Shore (2009), I found that young people in Serbia tended to make use of their youth to mark themselves as separate from 1990s era politics since they were too young to experience the hardships of the 1990s in a meaningful way. Several participants informed me that their parents succeeded in making them feel “guarded” from the realities of war by struggling to give them a “normal life” despite the chaos that prevailed. They therefore remembered the 1990s differently or less seriously than their parents’ generation. I found that the tendency among youth to separate themselves from 1990s era politics also translated into a lack of responsibility toward contemporary political outcomes and events that are connected to the legacy of the 1990s. This is important to consider since Serbian EU accession politics are still focused on making a recovery from this period. For example, most participants attributed Serbia’s slow-moving EU aspirations to the additional and specific accession membership conditions related to Serbia’s role in the Yugoslav wars. By assigning Serbia’s political problems and the responsibility for their resolution strictly to their parents’ generation, participants were able to position themselves as rightfully belonging to Europe regardless of Serbia’s inability to meet EU accession conditions.

As a literal example of distancing oneself from 1990s era political legacies and positioning oneself as belonging in Europe, several participants told me they planned to relocate to the EU after graduating university, describing Serbia as a country that they did not want to grow old in. Consider the following excerpt from Milica, 24:

I feel bad that I will most likely be one of those people who leave, but I really don’t plan to spend the next 10 years waiting for Godot, for something to change — and then to end up sounding like my dad when I’m 50, living in the past. I mean, not so much anymore. He really is much better now. But for a time he really spoke about how things were better before and nothing is worthwhile anymore. And I don’t want to be like that. To be that kind of old person, unhappy and bitter, only complaining about how pensions never come ... Honestly, I hope that one day I will come back and be part of a Serbia that is prospering, not a Serbia that is stagnating.

In saying that she hopes to “come back and be part of a Serbia that is prospering,” Milica suggests that Serbia’s perceived stagnation is not her or her generation’s problem to resolve. She brings up her father’s complaint that “things were better before and nothing is worthwhile anymore,” which implies that the deteriorated or stagnant situation in

Serbia became a problem in her father's time, and she was merely born into it. By making the decision to relocate to the EU, Milica positions herself as belonging in Europe despite Serbia's geopolitical position outside the EU. She reconciles the tension between where she is and where she sees herself as belonging by referring to the phenomenon of brain drain, thereby aligning herself with a critical mass of people who have left before her and who will leave after her.

As evidenced by the above excerpt, distancing oneself from 1990s era politics may lead to ambivalence or apathy toward the current political situation insofar as it continues to bear the legacy of the 1990s. However, as Schwenkel's (2011) research on youth in post-war Vietnam shows, youth groups' perceived ambivalence may be much more nuanced than it appears. Schwenkel (2011) focuses on the growing disconnect and historical distance between youth in Vietnam growing up in a time of peace and prosperity, and their country's experience of socialist revolution and war. She writes that older generations suspect that youth do not understand or appreciate the sacrifices made to reunite and liberate the country. However, she maintains that while youth did not experience the war directly, they continue to experience its "severe and enduring aftermath" (127) which influences their everyday experiences and shapes their aspirations for the future. She argues that youth are therefore affected by their nation's history despite the disconnection and apathy they are perceived to be exhibiting by older generations. Read in this way, Serbian youth's tendency to evoke a sense of separation from the 1990s and to position themselves as belonging in Europe (as represented by the EU) may actually stem from an intimate connection to the stories of 1990s era isolation told to them by their parents or other older generations. For example, Bojana, 26, said,

My dad's a little, you know ... bitter. And if you mention, I don't know, Americans or something to him, he goes crazy. He's very sensitive about those things: the war in Croatia, the bombings, the 1990s. I mean, if you mention Milošević — pfft! You'll be hearing about it for the next half hour, how he ruined everyone's lives. So, ever since I'm living on my own, I talk about that stuff [the topic of Serbian EU integration] way less. Maybe I should be more interested, but to be honest, I'm not terribly interested. I mean ... I know a bit. I know that Croatia's going to get into the EU in a couple months now, right? In July or something?

In this excerpt, Bojana makes a connection between her disinterest in Serbian EU integration politics and her father's excessive stories about the 1990s. While she separates herself somewhat from the 1990s by referring only to her father's experiences as opposed to her own, it is clear that her disinterest in contemporary politics stems not from being too far removed from the 1990s by her young age, but from a rather intimate knowledge of the 1990s gained through her father.

Taking another example, Dragana, 23, spoke at length about her father's experience of struggle in the 1990s, and then said,

I was probably too young then to look at it that way, so it wasn't too bad for me. I mean, it wasn't exactly ideal — I remember that you would go to the store and there's just nothing, and that my father baked bread because you would go to the

store and they don't have bread, or there's like a 30 kilometre line-up outside the store.⁴ I was saying to my sister — where did we buy make up before Lilly opened up?⁵ And I was thinking about it, and then it hit me — at the flea market! And really, I'm not kidding, we would go to the flea market! They'd bring things in from Macedonia ... And I guess you just kind of forget about those kinds of things, and so to me growing up here wasn't something traumatic.

Born in 1989, Dragana positions herself as “too young” to have experienced the 1990s in a “traumatic” way. It seems from her account of her father baking bread that her knowledge about her family's experience of struggle is informed less by the personal memory of, for example, the difficulty of buying groceries, and more from stories her family has told her about the hardships they experienced during this time.

Although she distances herself from the 1990s through her age, (“I was probably too young, ... it wasn't too bad for me”), nevertheless, she points out that things she would find absurd now (like buying make up at a flea market full of Macedonian imports instead of a western-style cosmetic shop) are things she actually experienced but “kind of forgot about” since she experienced them as a child. In this way, a forgotten memory of the 1990s influences her understanding of everyday life, in this case delineating where it is normal or reasonable to buy make-up. Through this rather mundane example, we can see a similar situation to the apparent disconnect shown by Schwenkel's (2011) Vietnamese youth: the participants' tendency to push the 1990s further into the past comes not from apathy or ambivalence towards this time, but from an intimate knowledge of it that continues to influence their everyday understandings and ideas about their futures.

Dragana's comments are also reminiscent of several participants' use of the phrase “a return to the 1990s” to elicit mock panic about the re-institution of visa regimes or economic isolation policies if Serbia does not join the EU. To take a sinister but poignant example, Anica, a 26-year-old post-graduate student, said,

The alternative [to joining the EU] would be ... I don't know, for us to continue to fall apart. Because that's all I knew growing up: that Serbia is slowly becoming smaller and smaller, that they're always taking some regions off of us, and that it's only going to continue to, how would I say this, to fall apart.

Although Anica stated elsewhere in our interview that she considers herself to be “part of Europe,” Serbia's lack of progress towards EU integration lags behind her self-understanding or self-positioning as European. Like other participants who joked about “a return to the 1990s” if Serbia does not join the EU, I would suggest that the participants' memories and understandings of the 1990s strongly inform how they currently understand the marker ‘European.’ In pinning together the threat of the 1990s and the threat of exclusion from the EU, they are evoking an idea of ‘Europe’ or what it means to be ‘European’ that is constructed in contrast to their ideas about 1990s Serbia. Being “part of Europe” is therefore expressed by separating oneself from this era through markers such as youth: being connected rather than isolated, shopping at modern stores like Lilly rather than make-shift flea markets, and moving forward in time rather than “living in the past” or “stagnating”

along with their parents' generation or those "old enough to be held responsible" (Shore 2009:327). Simply put, being 'European' can be read as being included in "the European story," and no longer being associated with the chaos of the 1990s through a never-ending list of EU accession conditions.

Urbanity and Europeanness

Most of the project participants were born and raised in Belgrade and were self-identified urbanites.⁶ Belgrade is a lively city with no shortage of cafes, bars, patios, and nightclubs, the best of which are tucked away into unmarked apartments, inner courtyards, abandoned factory buildings, or behind decrepit fences near the train tracks. There is a sense of chaos to the city: foreigners often point out that while the street signs are in Cyrillic, all tourist street-maps are in Latin script, and many of the colloquial names of streets are actually old names from the socialist era (such as Revolution Boulevard) that have been officially re-named on maps and street signs, but never fully adopted by city-dwellers. With a population of approximately 1.3 million, Belgrade is the largest city in Serbia. Novi Sad, the second largest city, has a population of only 260,000.

As a city, Belgrade bears both the legacy of the 1990s, during which time it was the capital of an aggressive and war torn pariah state, as well as the legacy of the post-wwII socialist period, during which time it was the capital of an internationally respected Yugoslavia. Jansen's research has found that in the context of EU expansion and Serbia's current peripheral position in the hierarchies of Europe, urban Serbian citizens experience Belgrade's rapid decline as a fall (or push) from grace (2009:826).

Jansen points out that in 1992, two-thirds of the population of Belgrade was made up of people who were born in rural areas and had moved to the city during their lifetime (2005:162). Citing Spangler (1983), he notes that approximately 6.5 million Yugoslavs migrated from rural to urban areas between 1948 and 1981 as part of the urbanization and industrialization programs of the post-wwII Titoist regime. It should have been no surprise then that when I asked participants to tell me about Belgrade, many of them brought up the influx of rural people into the city. For example, Bojana, the 26-year-old graduate student quoted earlier discussing her father's distaste for Milošević and her own disinterest in politics, said,

There are so many villagers [*seljaci*] here! It's not just on the edge of the city — it's downtown! I mean, just the worst of the worst. I see them on the street, but you know how it is, when you run in a different circle, you don't really interact.

Born and raised in Belgrade, Bojana jokingly told me that she was an "urban snob" and could intuitively tell the difference between a true Beograđanin/ka and someone who was from "the interior." I asked if it was a matter of dialect or fashion and she explained to me that it was a more intuitive feeling, a sort of urban radar.

Jansen's (2005) concept of deterritorialized urbanity in his research on post-Yugoslav urban self-perceptions in Belgrade and Zagreb is helpful for understanding this kind of vying for position: deterritorialized urbanity is the concept by which urban qualities are

granted or denied to city dwellers on the basis of criteria other than address, thereby creating a perceived rural-urban divide within a city. Although everyone lives within the city of Belgrade, for example, not everyone is considered to be (or considers themselves to be) a *Beogradanin/ka*. As Marko, 24, concisely explained to me, “They live here, but they’re not from here.”

I found that participants used the marker ‘urban’ to not only distinguish themselves from the city-dwelling *seljaci*, but also to position themselves or their demographic as belonging in the cultural space of Europe. This generally occurred in one of two ways: Either, the participant would attribute Belgrade with particularly European qualities, for example saying something like, “We have made a lot of progress, and we are a much more European city than any other city in Serbia.” Alternately, the participant would deny European qualities to rural parts of Serbia, as evidenced in the following statement: “There’s a lot of history here, and in that sense it’s something of a — I don’t know how to say this — a European city. It’s not like you arrived in some village.” By describing urban Belgrade as a “European city” as opposed to “some village,” the city and the urban-identified are lifted into the contested space of Europe while the countryside remains on the periphery.

The association of urbanity with Europeanness closely mirrors demi-orientalist (Wolff 1995) or Balkanist (Todorova 1997) discourse in which ‘Europe proper’ is characterized as progressive and civilized in contrast to the barbarianism and backwardness of the other. For example, Jansen argues that self-identifying as ‘urban’ in Belgrade involves painting a picture of oneself as cultured, educated, refined, and civilized in contrast to the ‘backwards’ rural peasant (2005:154). He argues that the influx of *seljaci* into the city is therefore perceived as an encroachment or even an “attack” (160) on urban cultural values, especially by older generations who grew up with the political ideal of “modernization as urbanization” (162) that marked the post-wwII Titoist regime.

Jansen’s (2005) discussion of the rural ‘threat’ to urban modernization in Belgrade is also based on the perceived association between rural influxes into the city and the threat of regression to 1990s-style nationalism, isolation, and backwardness. Ramet has argued that the rise of ultra-nationalism in Serbia was “a profoundly rural phenomenon” (1996:76) that relied on support from rural citizens. Although she was writing in 1996, four years before the overthrow of Milošević, Ramet points out that the rise of the ultra-nationalist movement constituted a “victory of the countryside over the city” (76), while the anti-nationalist, anti-war, and anti-Milošević opposition during this period came largely from Belgrade. Based on the association between 1990s nationalism and rurality, Jansen argues that urban self-identification in Belgrade is taking place within a wider discourse of “mourning for urban, European modernization” (2005:160), or nostalgia for the ‘what might have been’ if the 1990s had happened differently. He suggests that through negative descriptions of *seljaci* living in Belgrade, urbanites describe the city as being threatened by rurality to relapse to the 1990s.

I found urban-identified Belgrade youth tended to describe the city as being encroached upon by *seljaci*, but I would not say they described this encroachment as a threatening ‘attack,’ as Jansen found in his research. Perhaps because a large influx of people came to Belgrade from other parts of Serbia in the 1990s, youth in Belgrade today are more accustomed to the rural-urban mix and do not see the influx of rural people as an ‘attack’ on their urban identities, although they perceive themselves as being separate



A small anti-EU demonstration at Republic Square.

PHOTO: JELENA GOLUBOVIC

or genuinely urban. Nevertheless, having heard stories from their parents, participants of this study tended to contrast the golden years of their parents' Belgrade to the city as they know it today. For example, Goran, 30, said,

Too much immigration has happened in Belgrade in the last 20 years. Belgrade is no longer the European metropolis it used to be. And that's ok, you know? I mean, 2 million people live in Belgrade, and how many live in all of Serbia — 6 million? 7 million? So the majority of Serbia is Belgrade. Looking at it proportionally, it's just not possible for everyone in Belgrade to be urban and cool and critical and progressive and all that.

Goran distinguishes himself and his peers as 'truly' urban ("and cool and critical and progressive") as opposed to the non-urban city dwellers. Although Goran is fine with the fact that not everyone in Belgrade is urban, his view that "the majority of Serbia is Belgrade" suggests that he does not want to consider the rest of the country beyond Belgrade, which for him is certainly not cool or critical or progressive. If we transpose the concept of deterritorialized urbanity to the idea of vying for space in the symbolic geography of Europe, the use of urbanity as a signal for Europeanness can be read as a way for participants to position themselves as 'truly' European in relation to other (rural) Serbian citizens.

I found it interesting that numerous participants echoed Goran's perception that "Serbia is Belgrade," not only in terms of population, but also as the centre of government

and political decision-making processes. The oft-cited rhyming expression “*što južnije, što tužnije*” [the further South you go, the sadder it gets] further reinforced for me how participants ranked rural and urban in the Serbian hierarchy. In identifying as genuinely urban, Serbian youth stake claims to Europeanness as a symbolic or cultural designation by distancing themselves from the chaos of the 1990s, insofar as ultra-nationalism is perceived to be a rural phenomenon (Ramet 1996). In terms of Serbian EU integration and the symbolic geography of Europe, positioning urban Belgrade as “progressive” and treating the city as the most meaningful part of the country allows urban youth to raise Belgrade to the status of ‘European’ while leaving the Serbian countryside in the darkness of the Balkans, in that ambiguous zone between Europe and Asia.

Part Two: Abnormalcy discourse among Belgrade youth

I have explored how Serbian university students make use of the markers of youth and urbanity to mark themselves or their demographic as belonging within the cultural space of Europe despite Serbia’s geopolitical exclusion from the EU. Through this positioning, they distance themselves from responsibility for the violence and isolation of the 1990s, a tendency which I argue translates into a sense of separation from contemporary political outcomes and events insofar as Serbian politics are still focused on a recovery from the 1990s. In the following section, I explore this tension between Belgrade youth’s sense of belonging in Europe, on one hand, and the geopolitical and symbolic exclusion of Serbia from the EU, on the other, through the lens of abnormalcy discourse in post-socialist and post-conflict settings (Fehérváry 2002; Galbraith 2003; Greenberg 2011). Drawing on Greenberg’s argument that urban youth in Serbia perceive the country to be a “post-disciplinary state” (2011:90), a state that is unable to produce agentive subjects capable of moral action or of making a ‘normal life’ for themselves, I explore how commonplace depictions of life in Belgrade as “abnormal,” “chaotic,” “immoral,” “corrupt,” or “wild” can be understood in the context of EU expansion and Serbia’s position on the margins of European belonging.

Abnormalcy and idealization

Dejan, a 26 year old graduate student who asked to meet at his favourite café and insisted on paying for my coffee and lighting all my cigarettes for me, assured me that while things in Belgrade may appear normal on the surface to someone who is “just visiting,” the chaos of the city ran deep. Like many other participants, Dejan described everyday life in Belgrade as unregulated and uncertain: the system was corrupt and everybody was looking for a way to make things easier for themselves; plans were made day-by-day because nothing could be counted on in the long term. The sense of corruption that numerous participants described extended from the political sphere to everyday transactions and social relations. One student unknowingly summarized this common feeling: “Nothing here functions the way it’s supposed to.”

Anthropological research on everyday life in post-socialist settings has found that discourse about what constitutes a ‘normal’ life is constructed in relation to how people imagine life to be like in the West, and tends toward idealized and exaggerated depictions of the

consumerist lifestyle (Fehérváry 2002; Galbraith 2003; Greenberg 2011). Such idealized perceptions of western daily life come to be defined as ‘normal,’ contributing to a dramatic discrepancy between ‘the way things are’ and ‘the way things should be.’ For countries that were behind the Iron Curtain, idealized and exaggerated stories of what life was like in the West reinforced the sentiment that “real life was elsewhere” (Szmagalska-Follis 2009:388), and that life was better, easier, and more fulfilling on the other side of the Curtain. In the context of contemporary Serbia, idealizations about Western consumerist lifestyles stem partially from limited travel experience to the EU, and are further reinforced by pro-EU political platforms and ad campaigns which portray the EU as a “land of milk and honey,” according to several participants.

While Fehérváry (2002) and Galbraith (2003) have focused mainly on normalcy discourse as it relates to post-socialist consumer aspirations (in Hungary and Poland respectively), Greenberg (2011) takes an explicitly political focus in her research with urban youth in Serbia. Greenberg’s research shows that perceptions of abnormality in Serbia are inextricably connected to the atmosphere of corruption stemming from the 1990s, as well as the experience of feeling isolated from Europe. Through a focus on abnormalcy, she explores the moral dimension of normalcy discourse. She finds that many young Serbian citizens perceive Serbia to be in a state of crisis, moral chaos, and international isolation in which ‘abnormality’ thrives. She argues that the sense of lacking agency to realize goals regarding a ‘normal’ life was attributed not only to the constraining political and economic conditions characteristic of post-socialism, but also to a sense of moral decay that emerged in the 1990s with the disintegration of value systems and the rise of organized crime and state corruption. In contrast to the experience of Yugoslav citizenship, Greenberg found that young people in Serbia perceive themselves as no longer being ‘normal’ agents capable of effective or moral action in the world due to the “corrupting environment” (94) around them.

The relationship between the abnormality of everyday life and the corruption of the 1990s came across often in my research, evoking questions of how abnormalcy discourse is connected to broader ideas around European exclusion and belonging. Galbraith (2003) points out that discourse on the normal life can be read as a commentary on or critique of the existing state of affairs, or a means by which to contrast the everyday with the ideal. Among Belgrade youth, the common idea that “nothing functions the way it’s supposed to,” and the depictions of everyday life in Belgrade as abnormal, corrupt, and chaotic after the 1990s, were constructed against a contrasting idea of everyday life in EU countries as smooth, regulated, even effortless. More importantly, the EU was portrayed as a place where they felt that they belonged, and where they could realize their aspirations, as opposed to Belgrade, which was portrayed as too corrupt to function. The abnormality of everyday life in Belgrade was put forward variably as something they tolerated, embraced, or wanted to get away from, but never as something that they felt responsible for. Consider the following excerpt from Milica, 24, quoted earlier:

I’m going to Sweden [to pursue a Master’s degree after graduation] because I want a standard. That’s that. It’s a consequence of Serbia that you get sick of the chaos that rules here, that some people love. Sometimes it’s amusing because that chaos lets you slip through the cracks, but on the other hand, the system doesn’t function,

and you're not protected. You can't count on anything. And that's why I want to go to Sweden, because it seems to me that there is a high social standard over there, unlike here.

In this excerpt, the abnormalcy of Serbia is constructed in contrast to an image of Sweden (or the EU more generally). Milica expresses frustration of living in a system that “doesn't function,” and simultaneous a lack of responsibility for “the chaos that rules here,” which may be understood as a reference to the legacy of the 1990s. Through her decision to relocate to Sweden because she is “sick of the chaos,” she attributes Serbia's state of abnormalcy to the problems of her parents' generation and positions herself as belonging in a country with a higher social standard.

Agency and abnormalcy after the 1990s

Greenberg's concept of the “postdisciplinary state” (2011:90) provides a lens through which to think through the tension between abnormalcy discourse among Belgrade youth and their concurrent sense of belonging within the cultural space of Europe. She argues that urban youth in Serbia perceive it to be a postdisciplinary state: a state that is unable to produce subjects capable of either acting morally or making a ‘normal life’ for themselves. Through this concept, she makes a connection between having a sense of agency and being subject to disciplinary regimes of power. She argues young people in Serbia feel that the state does not provide the conditions for them to realize their agentive capacities in a meaningful way. Through talk about wanting a ‘normal life,’ Serbian youth express a desire to be part of “a state that works” (90): a functioning, regulated, and disciplinary state which would give them a moral compass for action.

The concept of the postdisciplinary state resonated strongly with my own research, especially as participants spoke about the political scene in Serbia, which is still dominated by 1990s era politicians, many of whom spilled over from the Milošević regime. Participants referred to political leaders as “war-lords,” “thieves,” “degenerates,” or “despots,” or simply by saying the word “politician” so scathingly that everything was implied. Consider the following excerpt from Marko, 24, who discusses the effects of growing up in a corrupt system,

Well, I've gotten used to this system of *fora* in Serbia.⁷ How there are no rules. And maybe, if everything were different — but it's also impossible! — we'd have to reform the judiciary a great deal. You know why it's impossible? Well, I can go and break all the laws I want, and I can get called into court. And I delay it: I don't show up to court once; I don't show up to court twice. I can do this for ten years. I can do this for the rest of my life. That's the *fora* in Serbia: you can do anything — but only if you have the nerves for it.

Marko's excerpt shows how growing up in a corrupt system or a postdisciplinary state causes him to “get used to” that system and to perpetuate it despite the fact he might morally disagree with it. He suggests that it is “impossible” to change the system for the better, since the changes that need to be made are on the level of the state (or judiciary) rather

than on the level of the everyday. Marko's comment suggests he does not feel he has agency to act morally in Serbian society, rather he has learned the *fora* and acquired the "nerves" to go along the system.

Since the EU represents a disciplinary regime through which Serbian citizens can experience a sense of agency through stability, international respect, and high standards of living, the return to 'normalcy' in Serbia is linked to the political goal of a return to Europe through EU accession (Greenberg 2011; Jansen 2009). A common idea expressed in interviews was that Serbia was so corrupt that its citizens could ignore its laws without fear of penalty while EU laws were inherently authoritative and unquestionable. In fact, Serbian society was described as willing or even prone to unlawfulness, given the irreparable atmosphere of corruption. Take the following example from Dragana, 23:

Until someone concretely tells us that we have to change something, we aren't going to. We aren't in a position where we are able to do it ourselves. And that's what would be good about it [EU integration], for some authority to come and say 'OK, no more games. No more fooling around. Now you have to apply this and that law.' And that we have to do it, that someone regulates it. Because otherwise someone's going to start veering a bit left, a bit right, I'll just go ahead and change this a tiny bit, get out of this or that. And then in the end it's chaos. So as far as all that stuff goes, I think it [the EU] would be really good for us.

Dragana's description of Serbian society's tendency to veer "a bit left, a bit right" until the system is in "chaos" is consistent with numerous participants' depictions of Belgrade as lawless, corrupt, and chaotic, as well as with Greenberg's (2011) characterization of the postdisciplinary society, in which people do not feel their state is able to provide them with a moral compass for action. Serbia is depicted as a society where corruption and lawlessness thrive, taking away individual agency or will to follow Serbian laws or to attempt to make progressive changes within the system. This depiction of Serbia is constructed in contrast to an image of the EU as an "authority" with the ability to impose law and order.

Conclusion

As new countries are accepted into the EU, the space on the outside of the EU shrinks and the exclusion becomes more evident, theoretically leading to increased resentment among those left outside, as was found by both Szmagalksa-Follis (2009) and Jansen (2009). This is perhaps most poignant in the countries of the Balkans or eastern Europe, since they have long been represented as culturally dichotomous to western Europe (Todorova 1997; Wolff 1995). Based on my limited sample of participants, I think that abnormalcy discourse among Serbian youth reveals a sense of tension between their self-understanding as belonging within the cultural space of Europe, and Serbia's geopolitical position on the outside of the EU.

Given the participants' sense of separation from responsibility for the 1990s, abnormalcy discourse can be read as a critique (Galbraith 2003) of the legacy of the Milošević regime, or an expression of the 'what might have been' if the 1990s had happened

differently. In simultaneously depicting everyday life in Belgrade as abnormal and everyday life in the EU as ideal, abnormalcy discourse expresses how participants understand and define their place in the contested space of Europe. Having grown up in the shadow of the 1990s, this position is marked by a sense of tension between European belonging and exclusion, between a version of life that Belgrade youth see themselves as deserving, and the legacy of the 1990s that prevents them from achieving it.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 All translations are mine.
- 2 All names have been changed.
- 3 Class position was another important avenue through which participants expressed European belonging, particularly through their status as university students. However, for lack of space this article has been condensed to focus on youth and urbanity.
- 4 She is exaggerating. The Serbian language has a flair for the dramatic.
- 5 Lilly Drogerie was actually founded in Serbia in the 1950s, but after the 1990s was privatized and re-opened as a western-style cosmetic franchise and pharmacy in 2003.
- 6 Three out of seventeen were born elsewhere in Serbia and came to Belgrade for university studies. Of those three, two self-identify as urban.
- 7 *Fora* is a slang word with no direct English translation. It means trick, catch, pun, gag, joke, etc.

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Cancer, Appearance, and Identity

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This article examines the relationship between cancer, appearance, and sense of self. Through engagement with participants who have had cancer I will explore how the physical impact of the disease and treatment on the body affects women's identity. I utilize interviews, photo-elicitation, and personal narratives as my primary methods. This research contributes to a greater understanding of the embodied experience of cancer and the influence of bodily changes on identity.

KEY WORDS appearance, beauty, cancer, embodiment, identity, sense of self

Our feelings need voice in order to be recognized, respected, and of use. I do not wish my anger and pain and fear about cancer to fossilize into yet another silence, nor to rob me of whatever strength can lie at the core of this experience, openly acknowledged and examined ... Imposed silence about any area of our lives is a tool for separation and powerlessness.

—Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*

My relationship to the hegemonic beauty ideals produced by the mainstream Western media is complicated to say the least. With the onset of puberty I became critically aware of the pressures women face to look a certain way (see for example Wolf 1990; Brumberg 1997; Furman 1997; Edmonds 2010). As a result I grew severely self-conscious of my appearance and this eventually developed into body dysmorphic disorder. Most of the time I feel oppressed and controlled by contemporary Western ideals of beauty and have consequently made it my goal to openly fight back by unpacking and critiquing gender expectations from a feminist activist perspective. However, the frustrating reality for me is that I experience the greatest relief from such standards when I believe I most closely resemble them (either that or when I am a recluse, hidden from public view and anticipated scrutiny). Christine Obbo calls this a *double-bind* (1990:290), and significantly Lila Abu-Lughod suggests double-binds can be productive sites of intervention for they subvert persistent and problematic notions of homogeneity and coherence (1991:476).

Drawing as creative meditation and documentation

CHRISTABEL HOMEWOOD

In a meditative reflexive state I made several drawings in my field notebook following a particularly enlightening interview with one of my key interlocutors. One of these drawings can be seen on the cover of this journal. During this interview the participant felt inspired to show me the scars on her body while discussing her cancer treatment, various surgeries, and sense of self. Seeing this participant's small, scared breasts with reconstructed nipples and tattooed areolae was a highly transformative experience for me. I was astonished by her beauty.

Michael Taussig (2011) posits that moments of astonishment, which are not necessarily always traumatic, result in subjective transformation as we develop new normative frameworks that reorder and alter past memories and through which we come to perceive and understand the world around us. Creating a drawing of this astonishing moment, in order to assist in reflecting upon how witnessing it transformed me, reinforced Taussig's proposition on a very personal level. The trust in that moment, the intimacy, the challenges and promises it communicated, inspired my thinking on beauty and perfection, allowing me to understand the relationship between sense of self and appearance in a new way. Witnessing the aftermath of what this woman's body had been put through, the overwhelming respect and love she had for her physical self, and the extent to which she felt empowered by the lessons she learned from her experience with life-threatening illness, caused me to reconsider my understanding of cancer and human resilience.

Creative meditation has always been a highly productive exercise for me. For as long as I can remember I have found the physical act of using my hands to create — whether that be to draw, paint, sculpt, build, sew, knit, cook, braid hair, etc. — to be a calming and grounding process. Engaging in creative expression of this sort enables me to stop over-thinking, to stop asking questions or seeking answers, and to simply wonder and see what flows forth from my subconscious when I am not asking my mind for anything in particular. Focusing on what my hands are doing rather than the order of my thoughts allows for intuition to take over and offer up brilliant insight.

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2011 *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

I have often been told that what I struggle to accept about my own body is ‘trivial’ or ‘only in my head.’ Whether or not that is accurate, such comments have caused me to contemplate what it must be like to experience unwanted and perhaps permanent changes to one’s appearance, to witness one’s body moving further and further away from that limited and limiting ideal, one’s physical appearance slipping out from under whatever control one had learned to have over it (in some ways similar to my experience of puberty and adolescence but with different threats and opportunities). In conceiving of this project, with the aim of pursuing a topic related to my aforementioned interests and with hopes of gaining knowledge that would inspire future work, I began thinking of family and friends who have experienced serious illness — cancer in particular — and what effects the physical transformations to their outward body may have had on their sense of self.

This paper focuses on the relationship between cancer, appearance, and identity. Specifically, I am interested in how the physical impact of cancer and cancer treatment on the body affect women’s sense of self. Given the expectations of women in our society to conform to and uphold contemporary Western images of beauty (for example: fertility, agility, fitness, slimness, large breasts, long hair, smooth skin), what do appearance and gender mean to women who have undergone chemotherapy, radiation, and/or surgery? These procedures often result in fluctuations in weight, hair loss, dry skin, brittle nails, skin discolouration, burns, scarring, the surgical modification or removal of parts of the body, and the loss of energy, agility, mobility, and cognitive function.

I endeavor to explore whether or not participants’ sense of self is linked to body image, and how they conceive of and value their bodies during and after treatment. If identity is linked to appearance then what happens to a person when cancer treatments alter the physical body in ways that do not adhere to the hegemonic ideals that inform a particular kind of belonging — specifically, a conventional (albeit not unproblematic) belonging — that is negotiated with broader socio-economic tensions, rather than one’s pathology? What happens to their sense of self, how they define themselves, who they see themselves as, their sense of worth? Does ‘living up’ to gendered ideals of beauty and tending to their outward appearance while undergoing or recovering from treatment help make life meaningful? Or do participants think that the requirement of women to look a certain way — no matter what they may be going through — speaks to greater issues of gender inequality? Is the preoccupation with outward appearance important or oppressive for participants? Or both?

Methodology

I utilized social connections to make contact with the organizers of a local cancer survivor support group offered by a hospice in Aurora, Ontario. The hospice is sponsored by government funds and intensive fundraising on the part of hospice staff and volunteers, making this particular ten week program, which has been run biannually since 2009, free for anyone with or having had cancer. The group meets weekly with a psychotherapist to share their stories, discuss issues important to them, and learn strategies for addressing stress, grief, trauma, and other challenges.

After informing the Director of Programs & Communication, Adele, of my research goals, and gaining her enthusiastic approval, she kindly elected to distribute a call for

participants via email to 'graduates' of the program which contained a recruitment letter from myself explaining the project, what would be required should they wish to be involved, and expressing that I would truly appreciate the opportunity to meet with them, learn from them, and explore this important subject with them.

Based on my own relationship with my body and experience of being a woman in Canada, I am drawn to learn about how other women understand and engage with Western ideals of beauty, but that is not to say that I do not recognize that men (and every sex other than 'male' or 'female') also face expectations to uphold normative gendered looks. For this reason my invitation to participate was sent to a number of women who had been present and engaged at support group meetings (it is worth noting that of the 50 or so graduates only two are men).

Initially my access to potential participants was mediated by Adele. The power difference between Adele as gatekeeper and myself as researcher was underscored when I received no replies several days after providing her with my letter. I began to worry that my email had been lost or blocked, or that she had forgotten to send it on, or that perhaps there was no interest. Any concerns I had were alleviated almost a week later when Adele informed me that she had only just contacted participants. The following day I had a response from a graduate who was keen to participate. However, I did not receive more than the one reply, and since I had been hoping for three to five participants, I requested permission from Adele to send a follow-up message and asked her if it would be possible to include the women registered in the autumn session. She agreed and within a few days of the second request for participants having been disseminated I was contacted by four more women expressing sincere interest in contributing. Such circumstances reinforced how essential dedication and cooperation between myself and various other individuals was to the project, and how this text is not solely my own production but that of everyone involved. Thankfully we all believed in the benefits of addressing the subject and were committed to working together.

My primary field site was the abstract and imagined creative and reflexive space in which participants developed an understanding of the subjectivity (sense of self) that lived between their cancer and their physical embodiment in the world (their appearance). Therefore, as this project was based on the personal narratives of participants, my principle method for data collection was semi-structured interviews. Prior to commencing interviews participants were given a detailed explanation of the research problem, my goals for the project, what would be required of them, their rights, and reaffirmation that their anonymity would be maintained. I obtained informed consent from all participants.

My aim was to conduct interviews at participants' own homes, for it was my objective that by meeting in a space that was comfortable for them, and in which they felt safe and perhaps empowered, we might foster relaxed and trusting relationships conducive to engaged conversations and the sharing of personal memories and experiences. This proved to be an appropriate decision, for not only were participants able to speak more freely than they may have done in a public setting, but I also came to learn that meeting outside of their homes would have been exhausting for several of the women still recovering from treatment. These individuals were able to spend more focused time with me than they would have done if we had met elsewhere. One participant, who had

been frustrated by several interruptions to our conversation, expressed that we should have arranged to meet someplace else. However, this likely would have prevented her from offering to show me her breasts in order to better explain her various surgeries — a moment which I found highly transformative. Witnessing the aftermath of what this woman’s body had been through and reflecting upon her positive emotional response to her appearance confronted my conception of perfection and standards of beauty. Furthermore, observing the love and respect she has for her body, how grateful she is for the wisdom she has gained from her experience with serious illness, and hearing about how abundant and meaningful her life is also challenged my preconceived notions of cancer and the resultant impacts on body and self. I came to understand that cancer is not always a death sentence that haunts a person forever. This woman’s ability to actively search for and find what she calls “benefits” throughout her journey with cancer has given me greater insight into the complexity of the human condition, our versatility and ability to thrive, and how subjective, contingent, unexpected, and complex the process of making a meaningful life can be.

Michael Taussig suggests that witnessing something astonishing and reflecting upon our emotional response can transform us in positive ways if we become more aware of how and what we know, our own rationality and values (belief systems and moral judgments), and how such things influence our actions and reception in the world (2011). I have certainly found this to be the case as the insight I gained from that moment of astonishment and self-discovery influenced how I interpreted the data collected, for instead of approaching the subject of cancer and appearance with pessimism as others have done (see Lorde 1980 and Jain 2007), I was able to take a considerably more optimistic and empathetic position.

My strategy during these interviews was to start with a few fixed questions regarding the type of cancer the participant had been diagnosed with, the treatment they underwent, and what side effects and bodily alternations they experienced. That led to unstructured conversations regarding their embodied experience of cancer and the impact of physical changes on their identity. I later followed-up with informal interviews by email or phone in order to build an archive of data to review and code for references to physical appearance and definitions of self, providing me with evidence related to my original research problem.

I believe that my being a woman was a key factor in developing the rapport with participants that facilitated the sharing of sensitive information. Participants were able to disclose intimate details of their cancer experience with the expectation that, while I may not have had cancer, I could relate to the embodied experience of being a woman (however essentializing that perception may be). In order to develop trust and feelings of safety that would support this depth of engagement I encouraged what Gerald D. Berreman calls “safe conversations” (1972). For example, before discussing cancer, appearance, and identity, I asked participants about their families, acknowledged and played with their pets, or inquired about upcoming trips abroad (if I knew they had travel plans). In doing so we were able to learn more about one another, laugh, and connect. This connection was affirmed when upon my departure from their homes participants warmly extended a hand, or more often requested a hug, and expressed looking forward to continuing the conversation.

As these women had been so open with me about their experiences and feelings I felt it necessary to expose myself and become vulnerable in return. At the end of each interview I elaborated on why I had become interested in this subject, how I have been impacted by beauty ideals, and my own history with body dysmorphic disorder. I have often found that this sort of reciprocal disclosure of personal or private information has greatly benefitted my relationships with other women and it was thus my hope that it would promote a similar kind of trust between myself and participants, while also challenging the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee where one person does most of the asking (or taking) and the other the telling (or giving).

In addition to engaging in such conversations with the aim of developing and maintaining rapport, I was also very aware of how participants might respond to what Erving Goffman would call my “sign vehicles” —how participants’ impressions of me (based on their interpretation of my appearance, speech, emotions, disposition, values, and beliefs, etc.) would determine what and how much they divulged during the interview (2004). Being cognisant of my sign vehicles enabled me to negotiate my subject position and assisted in my impression management and ability to navigate the field. I was aware of my facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, and choice of words for I wanted to communicate, visually and verbally, my interest and compassion for what participants had to say. For example, when faced with unexpected or uncomfortable situations I deliberately neutralized my emotional reactions, monitoring my facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice in order to prevent participants from misreading my feelings and becoming uncomfortable and perhaps reserved.

Furthermore, in order to support participants in feeling relaxed during interviews I did not use an audio recording device for I anticipated that this might compromise the desired dynamic by creating a more formal atmosphere in which participants may have felt uncomfortable speaking freely. Instead I utilized my field notebook and endeavoured to review and augment my notes immediately after each meeting. During my first interview, and part of the second, I attempted to take jot notes so as to focus as little as possible on the act of writing; however, it became apparent that the women noticed what I wrote down and what I did not, and when some of them began to say things like, “I don’t know if this is relevant” or “This might be significant,” I decided to transcribe as much as I could for it seemed to greatly encourage participants in their communication with me. What they had to say was important and I was concerned that feeling self-conscious would prevent them from mentioning things they suspected I might not deem ‘worthy.’ Their experiences were personal and I did not want to invalidate what they were so bravely and generously sharing.

Interviewing can be a significant feminist strategy for research “if it makes women’s voices *audible*” (Reinharz 1992:48). However, it was not my intention to take the “authoritative stance of ‘giving voice’ to the other” (Clifford 1988:491). My hope was for dialogue to result in a co-produced text that would give authority to participants’ lived experience and function as a platform for their voices to be heard (see Patricia Hill-Collins 1986).

In order to further account for my ethnographic authority I made use of direct quotations as a means of making participants’ presence and significance evident, and as a method for creating a polyphonic text open to multiple interpretations (Clifford 1988:486–488, 491). It is important to note that the views of participants are not reflective



or representative of every individual's experience of cancer and cancer treatment. However, I do not see this as a problem since anthropology has moved beyond trying to represent social totalities, bounded communities, and fixed populations (see Gupta & Ferguson 1992; Marcus 1995). Instead, this research aims to offer insight into the particular reality of my consultants, and the final text, what Biehl and Locke (2010) would call a micro-ethnography, identifies the contours of issues that shape the experience of recovery for women coming out of cancer and focusing on the complex of appearance and identity. By looking at these specific examples I'm able to make more general observations that I hope will elucidate our understanding of cancer, appearance, and identity and not essentialize or silence other voices (see McMurry 2005).

Another way in which theory informed my practice in the field, resulting in a highly productive methodology, was my use of photo elicitation as a research method; this complimented my emphasis upon self-image and the embodied experience of appearance. I found that asking participants to view and reflect on photographs of themselves encouraged them to discuss how they conceptualized their bodies. In her ethnography on beauty and aging in the United States, Frida Kerner Furman found that photo elicitation encouraged participants to talk about "their appearance as portrayed by the photo and in their recollections" by gaining some distance from it and so reducing the extent to which they felt self-conscious examining and discussing their bodies (1997:10). I found this appealing, for not only does the method facilitate discussion, but it supports participants in addressing what they consider to be important, highlighting what is meaningful for them, and reducing the extent to which I might limit the course of the interview (Furman 1997:10).

Reviewing photographs of participants taken at different stages in their lives—as children, young women, before, during, and after cancer, and treatment—was a productive exercise, not only in observing how participants responded to images of themselves, listening to commentary on their appearance, and learning about their ideals of beauty, but in most cases the physical act of moving closer together in order to better view a photograph at the same time created a sense of intimacy that seemed to build the trust required for this depth of engagement.

Given the subject I believe these methods were appropriate means of data collection, yet they also reflect the constraints of this non-traditional field site. For instance, opportunities for participant observation were limited. As I did not want my presence at support group meetings to interfere with how individuals interacted at these sessions, or with what they gained from them, I did not request permission to be present.

While these methods are suited to the collection of data from personal narratives, I remained conscious of how they might have caused participants to reflect critically on their own subjective experiences, and that touching upon sensitive subject matter could cause emotional distress. Ethically I had to consider that I could be making people uncomfortable for the purposes of research; however, it was my intent that by acknowledging this subject, participants would feel validated, affirmed, and important.

I took great care to be respectful in my analysis of the data for I was concerned about causing emotional or psychological harm. Maintaining ethnographic distance or neutrality was impossible, for I am invested in the subject and with my participants, and I would argue that attempting to do so would have been irresponsible and unethical—it is important to be sensitive to how participants themselves will be affected (see Nash 1976; Mahmood 2008; and Gibb 2005). This type of ethnographic research collapses the categories of activist, researcher, and fellow human being. That said, I have aimed to remain critical of what I bring to the field—my beliefs, values, and biases—so that this representation of the subject might be as true to the participants as possible while still striving for the feminist goal to “rediscover, revalue, and bring to public view women’s experiences that have been obscured, occluded, or devalued because they have been seen as socially insignificant or morally irrelevant” (Furman 1997:6).

Despite my best efforts to be culturally relativistic, reflexive, and compassionate, an inevitable imbalance of power between myself and participants remains, for ultimately it is through the lens of my subject position that my interpretations and understandings have evolved, it is from my field notes and memory of interviews that many quotations were reconstructed, and whether consciously or unconsciously it was my comprehension of the data that determined what content was included or excluded. However, in order to again strive for the co-production of knowledge and a balanced text, I reviewed my research with participants and included their feedback in the final draft (see Clifford 1988).

In the end, with all of these ethical and moral concerns and considerations, I can only strive to do my best with the tools that I have for, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes notes,

Seeing, listening, touching, recording can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of solidarity. Above all, they are the work of recognition. Not to look, not to touch, not to record can be the hostile act, an act of indifference and of turning away. [1995:418]

The Participants

Each participant was asked to choose their own pseudonym, and the order in which their names appear reflects the order in which the interviews took place. Not all participants were born and raised in Canada but all currently reside within the Greater Toronto Area. All quotes are either pulled from email correspondence between myself and participants or reconstructed from my memory of one-on-one interviews and the notes I took during those interviews. All quotes have been reviewed by participants. It was important to include participants' own voices in the text as it is from their experiences that we can all learn a little more about the human condition.

NORICA

Norica was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2012 at the age of 38. Within a period of eight months she received chemotherapy, underwent a single mastectomy, and was treated with radiation. At the time that we met she was considering a double mastectomy and breast reconstruction sometime in the future after regaining her health.

While discussing the physical changes to her appearance caused by cancer treatment Norica explained, "I wanted to look like 'me' for my children. I still wanted to look like the mother they knew — considering that huge physical attributes were going to change. I was going to wear makeup, scarves, bigger earrings. I did not feel as attractive without hair, but with the wig I felt good. Getting dressed and putting on my wig or scarf, and makeup, and having the girls choose my earrings every morning, did give me a boost. The girls loved watching me wrap my scarves. The scarves were fun. I built in as many positives as I could. I wanted to look good because I hate making other people upset."

Norica, like the other participants, chose a wig that closely resembled her hair colour and style before chemotherapy. During treatment a woman had approached Norica at a social function to tell her how great her hair looked. Norica had replied, "Thank you so much, it's a wig, but you just gave me the biggest compliment. You actually thought this was my hair. That means I did a really good wig pick."

Norica described her ideals of beauty in the following way, "Someone with soft eyes, no hard edge, who looks very spirited, has a soft and curvy figure — because it's more feminine — but isn't too huge. Someone with a healthy, fit looking figure, and I tend to think that long hair is more feminine, but I have seen women with short hair who look feminine." She continued, "I feel that I am pretty feminine, and when I get dressed up I dress feminine. My breasts were not really a symbol of femininity for me, even though I had big boobs and lots of cleavage." She later elaborated, "I was sad about losing the breast because it was like, 'They're my breasts.' All those memories: when I first developed; when I transitioned from a B cup to a C cup; when I first started dating my husband; breast feeding my children. I would lay awake at night and hold my breast and these memories would come to me."

Reflecting upon how the physical effects of cancer impacted her sense of self Norica explained, "As I'm getting further away from treatment I am thinking less about what I look like to my girls. I'm sick and tired of looking in the mirror and feeling so deficient. The weight thing is bothering me. I am in full out menopause so I'm not losing weight the way I used to. I look in the mirror now and I see me

with cancer. My hair is at an awkward stage. I don't feel like I'm getting back to normal. When I look at me on the outside I miss who I was because I'm not healthy like I was. My eyes look different, I look downtrodden. It's probably because I can't differentiate between what I see on the outside and how I feel on the inside . . . My appearance affects my identity. My identity isn't what it used to be. My identity is the whole package and my appearance is part of that. The appearance of me being wobbly on my bike is not 'me.' I used to ride a racer. I know what I look like to other people. I'm overweight but I've always been physically active. I feel clumsy. I think chemo brain is preventing me from being able to react fast enough. The outside of me doesn't look like who I am. Now other people may look at me and think, 'Oh look, she's overweight and has trouble riding a bike.' That's not the case. It bothers me that people automatically assume that people who are overweight — not obese — are unhealthy. How they connect weight with health. I hate that I have to tell people that I can't do things. It's like, 'Here we go again, bullshit about the cancer thing.' I am sad that I've lost certain ways of looking and being."

RUTH

Ruth was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2013 at the age of 49. She received radiation treatments and chose a single mastectomy with reconstruction over a lumpectomy.¹ She had hoped to augment both breasts at the same time, but due to a severe infection she was only able to receive the one implant. When we met, she was just beginning to feel well enough to start arranging for reconstructive surgery.

Ruth indicated that during treatment she was not panicked about her appearance, but she was concerned about being attractive to her husband and did worry about how people might, and did, react when she did not wear her temporary prosthesis in public. "I do enjoy looking feminine, but I have always had small breasts — smaller than an AA cup — so my breasts were never really a strong symbol of femininity or womanhood for me, except during intimacy. I am surprised by how much I do miss the breast, the sensations in particular. If it wasn't for the cultural standards I wouldn't have the reconstruction. Culturally, people freak out." She later elaborated, "I wear the prosthesis at work because I think it would be too distracting if I didn't. There were a few days, when our washer was broken, that I went to work without it, but I felt I needed to cover up for the sake of the others." She further explained, "Another reason for having the reconstruction is that the prosthesis does not breathe. It's a silicone breast and when I exercise sweat builds up behind it in the folds of my scar tissue. Sometimes it burns (still healing from radiation, too, I guess). It's quite unpleasant because behind the prosthesis it doesn't dry very easily. So I don't wear it when I typically exercise, but that leaves out some exercise I might like to do with a group that is not my family."

Most of the compliments that Ruth received about her appearance prior to cancer did not influence how she viewed her body, for she did not always believe that people were being truthful with her. However, she remembers one time in particular when her husband gave her a compliment that she appreciated. She was lamenting the loss of her breast and her husband consoled her by saying, "Well, if you've gotta have one breast, at least it's a good one."

While discussing the changes to her appearance during and since cancer treatment she explained, “I feel confident when I feel I look good. Wearing makeup, having my hair done, and wearing nice clothes has been important to me. I believe it’s more professional. I suppose it’s what I see in the media, the cultural standards.” She later elaborated, “I’ve steadily gained weight since I was first suspicious of the lump in my breast [February 2013]. I’ve gained 20-plus pounds and none of my nice new clothes fit. I’m not thrilled about this. It was a very expensive new wardrobe! But I’m not stressing about it too much. I realize that I need to work on regaining my health and strength. Being physically fit and strong has always been grounding for me, even in difficult times . . . I’ve always thought I had a nice behind. That hasn’t changed other than getting a little bigger. And my face was pretty and feminine most of the time before cancer too. So I don’t feel less feminine without the breast. I may feel less feminine because I’ve gained weight and the year of treatment shows on my face and in my new gray hair. But I feel confident. And that’s a good thing.”

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 at the age of 55. She underwent a single mastectomy followed by chemotherapy. Elizabeth chose not to have reconstruction and instead uses a prosthesis. She did not want another surgery to further prolong her recovery and delay her from returning to activities she enjoyed.

Elizabeth took up ballroom dancing in 2005 and was just beginning to get used to, and enjoy, wearing slightly more revealing costumes by the time she received her diagnosis. “When you dress up and you do a dance routine it’s okay to show cleavage. It did make me feel beautiful, and of course, I lost that. That has been one of the difficulties I have had to cope with. I have had to change my wardrobe to accommodate.” When discussing the impact that the mastectomy had on her sense of self she said, “You lose your whole breast, not just part of it, so suddenly you don’t look like what you did look like. Even though you could have reconstruction, which I haven’t had, even with reconstruction it would never look the same.” She continued, “For the first while, I can’t say how long, it was tough to look in the mirror full on. Once I was dressed, and had my actual prosthesis, that made a huge difference . . . I mean, who would want to go out socially [without the prosthesis]? I guess some people do, but I could never see myself doing that.” When I asked her why that was she answered, “It’s a sense of confidence. I wanted me to look like me, I guess.” She later explained, “The prosthesis was important for me to feel more balanced by matching the weight of the prosthesis with the remaining breast—it put less strain on the muscles on the side with the breast (I hope that makes sense) and it also made me feel more put together, more feminine, more like I was used to seeing.”

Elizabeth showed me a photograph of herself that had been taken in flowering woodland on her husband’s family property when she was in her early twenties. “When you had mentioned getting pictures, I immediately thought of this picture. It was always a favourite of my husband. As you can see I was quite blonde — when

my hair went into the ‘mouse’ category I absolutely hated that. My whole complexion changed. I looked different. Before treatment I had my own hair, rather than dyed hair, and when it fell out what was left underneath was all blonde! I had been dying my hair with henna after it grew back in, because it’s less toxic, but I was not happy with the colours I was getting. I’ve just had it dyed this dusty blonde. I love the colour. This is really me.” She elaborated, “I think for me, ‘looking like me’ is not so much about the physical changes, i.e. loss of breast, but more about my perception of my whole persona. With the chemo and subsequent hormone therapy, my skin has aged a lot and I think that bothers me more than anything.”

The week that Elizabeth stopped wearing her wig she was approached by a woman in a bookstore who said, “Oh, I just love your hair! I’ve been trying to get up nerve to go that short. You look absolutely amazing with it that short.” Elizabeth said to me, “I don’t think I told her. I remember telling other people after that the reason why it was so short. I always felt kind of funny . . . how would people take it? ‘Oh well the reason you’ve got hair that short is because you’ve had cancer.’ I was worried about making people feel really uncomfortable.” She added, “I think part of it is also that you just don’t always want to be talking about cancer.”

I asked Elizabeth if feeling good about her appearance during treatment helped her to feel better or more positive and she said, “Oh, for sure. I went to the Look Good Feel Better workshop. I had lost my hair but not my eyebrows. I learned how to put makeup on and how to fake that I had eyelashes.” In correspondence she said, “Wigs, prosthesis, reconstruction offers are helpful options to consider. Wearing a wig was great for me as I got to have a ‘good hair day’ everyday! The makeup tips were very helpful while on chemo as it helped to make me feel pretty. I have actually continued to wear more makeup since that time as I now like to wear it more often than I used to.”

SARAH

Sarah was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2013 at the age of 76. She underwent a laparoscopy after which she received chemotherapy.² As a result of cancer treatment she developed peripheral neuropathy and her pre-existing arthritis has worsened, effecting her mobility, agility, and balance.

While looking at the photographs she had prepared to show me she recalled feeling good about her self-image, “Oh, I felt good. I’ve always enjoyed being healthy.” Several minutes later, while discussing how she felt about the physical changes to her appearance caused by cancer treatment, she said, “I knew I would be losing weight and I was determined to do this makeup thing. I wanted hair that looked okay, I wanted the clothes I had to look good so I was choosing the smallest things I could find.” She paused and said in a contemplative tone, “Self-image was very important to me.” She explained, “It gradually transpired to me that I’m very feminine. The things that appealed to me were blouses as much as tee-shirts, skirts as much as . . . everybody wears pants now but when there was a choice I would’ve taken a skirt. And until the point where I nearly ruined my feet I wore very high heels. I liked looking at people, like Elizabeth Taylor, that were feminine, so I just wanted to be as feminine as I could. It’s not a Marilyn Monroe look — it’s not a

sexy look — it's more of a healthy look." She went on, "I hope that the way I look is projecting the image of who I am — that I like to be involved in things. I don't want to look like someone who can't say what they think . . . Women with breast cancer have it worse, even though it's more likely to be cured, because with ovarian cancer nobody knows you've had your ovaries out, but our image is based on what our face looks like, what our hair looks like, and what our boobs look like. If you lose one of those major parts, you have a whole different persona that you're sending out — you're presenting a whole different image to the world." I asked Sarah how changes to her appearance during cancer treatment impacted her sense of self and she said, "Losing hair, losing weight, losing mobility, having to take a cane! You feel so discouraged . . . I couldn't stand up straight. I was mortified by that. I would not be seen outside with a walker, it was bad enough having to take a cane. My self-image does not see me with a walker. Those are images that speak of decrepit and I do not see myself as decrepit." She explained, "After the surgery I looked in the mirror and I saw an old, decrepit lady and it was so hard look at . . . to see me change overnight from somebody who was vibrant and active and involved in all these clubs, painting and drawing in major shows, having many, many friends in all kinds of different directions, into somebody who could hardly get from the bed to the bathroom and looked like an old lady. I was skinny and weak. It's the image of where you're headed!"

When I asked her if wearing the wig and makeup made her feel better she said, "Oh yeah! You'd look in the mirror and you didn't look that bad! I felt so ill at ease with a wig on. I forced myself to go to the local supermarket with it on to judge how people reacted to it. To my surprise no one seemed to notice. I thought, 'Good, at least I know it looks normal, that I look like a person, it doesn't look like a wig. It was a good wig.'" She continued, "I've always been amazed at women who can walk out the door with a bald head. I find it distressing to see. I know they're going through cancer and they don't look good. It's a very, very bold statement for a woman." Sarah did not like the neutral coloured scarves offered at the Look Good Feel Better session she attended. "Instead I went to the drugstore and chose a really cute scarf, in shocking pink and purple, because if I'm going to be wearing a scarf, it's so obviously apparent that I'm bald, that I'm going to wear a bright scarf as if I'm enjoying it." She added, "The instructors at Look Good Feel Better said, 'No matter what you're going to be pale so pump up the makeup.' They told us not to be afraid to do so because that's what you're projecting. If you want to let people think you're trying, and feel good, let them see that you look good."

GAYA

Gaya was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011 at the age of 48. She had two lumpectomies before being treated with chemotherapy. After a year and a half of chemo she underwent a double mastectomy with immediate DIEP flap reconstruction.³

As a teenager Gaya felt that the way she looked prevented people from acknowledging her intellectual abilities. "In high school I was 'the beautiful one' and my best friend was 'the smart one.' We were like a team. But I remember getting really

upset and saying, 'I want to be the smart one.' I was upset that I should take 'the beautiful crown' and her 'the smart crown.' I kept thinking, 'I am as smart and I have all this to offer too.' It really bothered me.

While discussing how she felt about her appearance before cancer and treatment Gaya said, "My breasts were just a part of my body. I was not ashamed of them, not proud of them." She explained her reasons for having reconstruction, "It kind of softened the idea. I was scared, actually, of having two big scars — I was scared of the change. The reason people do reconstruction, usually, definitely for myself, is it's about self-image. I just didn't want to see those big scars. I've seen other women with the scars and I thought this is just a constant reminder of the catastrophe. But, you know, I still have scars." She went on, "My original thoughts were, 'Eh, I've gone through all this shit but at least they'll get rid of my tummy and I'll get nice boobs.' That's how you connect to it in the beginning. For many women my age the nipple is heading south, it's not looking forward, it's not in the centre — you know, after breastfeeding. So you think 'There's got to be a benefit,' and you hold on to that. At the end of all this I might just come out looking better, and to that degree it feels good. I don't wear a bra, it's nice. I didn't want implants because they always feel foreign, and although they give sexier breasts — a bit like the porno boobs — they don't move. These [showing me her breasts], they move. You can connect to it as 'renewed,' 'restored.' So in the end of all this I will end up with better looking breasts than I had and a flat tummy. Hey, who doesn't want that at the age of 50?"

Gaya addressed her sense of self post-mastectomy and said, "I'm not sure that feeling less feminine has to do with surgery. It has to do with my age and menopause. This would've happened regardless. I was already on a personal journey of letting go of anything to do with sexuality in terms of identifying as feminine. It was a burden for me to be masculine or feminine, one or the other. Now it's more about just being who I am regardless of feminine or masculine."

In addition, Gaya described the experience of losing her hair during chemotherapy and explained, "You're like a billboard — everyone who comes to meet you has to deal with their own mortality, whether they are conscious of it or not, and that can bring many different reactions. People that are centred, and in a good place themselves, will be able to bring compassion and love. People who have a lot of fear of their own mortality will bring anger. I actually had it said to me, 'Get out of here, I can't deal with this.' Some people felt sorry for me ... I bought a wig two weeks before chemo treatment started. Mainly because I thought it would be hard for the girls [her daughters] to face a bald head. Not so much for me. But I never ended up wearing it because my feeling that it was gonna be hard for the girls was nonsense. They accepted it because I accepted it. It's very interesting, there are two sides to it. The reason that you lose the hair is sad. But the actual loss of hair is actually refreshing. Not needing to look after it or take care of it. There's freedom and some kind of truthfulness about it. It's a bit like being a nudist, you know? This is me. I was always admiring women that kind of did it, that went really, really short. I saw it as strength. For me it was this way of experiencing it." She elaborated, "My self-image is not built so much on how I look. Of course it's important,

because when you look better you feel better, but for me I work from the inside out, not the outside in. It wasn't important for me to look like I looked before because I am not like before. On the one hand you don't want to shock everyone with your bald head, but on the other hand I did not feel the need to hide it. Of course I felt pressure from the outside to take care of others. I felt pressure, but I'm a bit of a rebel. It's like 'No, you know what, really?' People ask how you're doing like, 'Oh you're back? You look good, you're back? Good, you're not sick? Can we now go back to life?' Which is a shame because there is so much learning and beautiful awareness that is coming out of dealing with death, but no one wants to take the course, it's not a popular course."

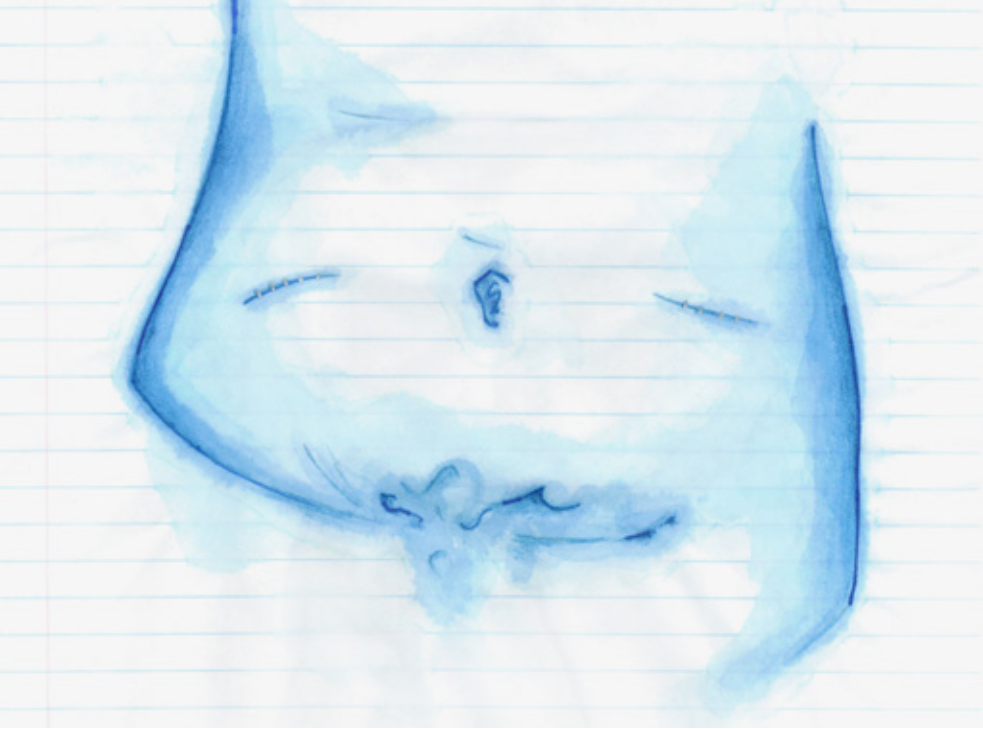
Analysis and Conclusions

Bodily appearance affects social identifications and self-definition and, therefore, how an individual experiences an altered body ... Personal identity means the way an individual defines, locates, and differentiates self from others ... The concept of identity implicitly takes into account the ways people *wish* to define themselves ... Human existence essentially means embodiment ... Mind and consciousness depend on being in a body ... Illness threatens a person's sense of integrity of self and the body and of self and the world ... They risk becoming socially identified and self-defined exclusively by their impaired bodies ... What unity means can only be defined subjectively.

—Kathy Charmaz, *The Body, Identity, and Self: Adapting to Impairment*

The shift from a predominant focus on inner qualities to widespread preoccupation with external attributes that occurred in Western society during the nineteenth century resulted in a general obsession with 'perfecting' the body as a primary means of self-expression (Brumberg 1997). The increased association between appearance and identity encouraged the maintenance of a socially acceptable image that would enable a sense of belonging and, for many of us, worked to turn our bodies into our central project (Brumberg 1997). Ideals that prescribe what the body 'should look like' are linked to social values, and while certain aspects of our appearance have at times been more significant than at others and the reasons for tending to our appearance have evolved, the outer body is still the canvas on which we attempt to paint a picture of 'who we are' (see for example: Brumberg 1997; Furman 1997; Edmonds 2008; Popenoe 2005; Charmaz 1995).

Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Gaya are aware of how their bodies are read by others as indicative of their character and in different ways have worked to maintain an appearance that reflects who they are and how they want to be perceived. For example, they are conscious of how their bodies communicate: their personality; their values (moral/ethical and spiritual/religious); abilities (physical and intellectual); interests (social and personal); position in society ('insider' or 'outsider'); and their various roles (e.g. grandmother, mother, wife, professional). Their desire to look a certain way (or not to



look a certain way) and to be understood and appreciated on their own terms caused them to manage their appearances so as to be meaningful for them. For Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, and Sarah looking “feminine” (the “appropriate” gender for their sex and which most participants associate with normative female looks) is significant to their expressions of self. Gaya, on the other hand, is not necessarily concerned with upholding hegemonic ideals of sex and gender but rather with not having her character and abilities misinterpreted by others who make superficial judgments based on her appearance. That said, prior to cancer all five women had developed appearances with which they were relatively comfortable and which signified their belonging in various social arenas.

Furman explains that for many individuals “there is a psychological need for continuity in one’s self-identity throughout the lifecycle” (1997:108). The desire to “look like me” that most participants expressed suggests the need to confirm “a link between their present experience and their past behaviour and image ... affirming their membership in a continuing social community by conforming to social expectations regarding acceptable self-presentation” (Furman 1997:110). Othon Alexandrakis suggests that “holding onto the good” can be moments of self-authoring that involve looking back in order to look forwards, selecting something from a history rewritten to give cogent form, content, and direction to the future (email to author, March 17, 2014).⁴ Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, and Sarah expressed this need for continuity. They are attached to their pre-cancer appearance/identity and do not wish to be solely defined by cancer. Taking steps to “look like me” (their appearance/identity having been threatened by the physical effects of cancer treatment), or to manage their appearance in ways that were meaningful to them during and after treatment, also suggests a desire to experience a sense of control at a time of great uncertainty. Furman notes that “total categories rob those who are labeled of their subjectivity, of their freedom of self-definition” (Furman 1997:108). Therefore, by tending to their appearances these women could influence the social labels signified by how they looked and which get read by others as reflective of their character, as well as negotiate an identity (a sense of self) with which they were comfortable.

In addition to recognizing that tending to their appearances enabled a sense of belonging, utilizing the body to express personal identity, and taking steps to feel good about how they looked for their own self-esteem, participants also expressed that they managed their appearances during cancer treatment, to varying degrees, so as not to upset or distress others (e.g. grandchildren, children, spouses, friends, people in general). They worked to preserve the appearance/identity that those who know them were used to and comfortable with, adhering to the gendered expectation of women —“feminine” women, rather —as nurturers and caregivers. Furman suggests that “women’s identity, in this and other ways, is geared towards pleasing others” (Furman 1997:45). Attending to appearance in order to assure acceptance supports Michael Foucault’s theory that power not only works on us but through us when we internalize hegemonic discourses and discipline ourselves accordingly so as not to be forsaken as “other”(1972; 1977; 1975a; 1975b).

That participants were able to control their appearance and identity and retain a sense of femininity by wearing a wig, having their makeup done, using a prosthesis, undergoing reconstructive surgery, and/or maintaining a certain weight, shows gender, and beauty for that matter, to be a performance, rather than natural or inherent qualities, that is inspired by ‘the simulacra’ (a copy of a copy of a copy of some ‘ideal’ female and femininity that has never and will never exist) and caters to the perceived desires of a heterosexual ‘male gaze’ (Butler 1988; Baudrillard 1984; Mulvey 1975). Maintaining a ‘feminine’ appearance enabled participants to feel normal, attractive, appreciated, accepted, and often helped them feel more positive. However, Furman laments that “because women’s worth is so frequently associated with their physical attractiveness . . . physical changes [such as those caused by cancer treatment] . . . call into question women’s social value and consequently raise ethical concerns” (Furman 1997:104). While I do not support the link between a woman’s physical attractiveness, femininity, and value, for my consultants Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and to some extent Gaya, tending to their appearance by living up to ideals of beauty and femininity (often dovetailing with personal health narratives—conveyed by the desire to maintain their pre-cancer appearance) made their bodies meaningful in pleasurable ways, quite the opposite to how the effects of cancer caused them to experience their bodies. They were able to enjoy their bodies and not just suffer in them.

Rebecca Popenoe suggests that “even in the absence of glossy magazine pictures of fashion models, or any images of what women ‘should’ look like . . . body ideals are still very important” and that “the pictures of trim and trained, collagen’d and Botox’d bodies could disappear from our visual world, and it is not likely . . . that we would cease striving to get our bodies to look a certain way” (2005:10, 21). Yet, unlike some feminist theorists who address this subject (see Naomi Wolf), Popenoe recognizes that living up to gendered ideals of beauty may in fact be meaningful and gratifying and not necessarily entirely oppressive, which I believe to be the case for Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Gaya (for even though Gaya resents being seen or valued exclusively as ‘the pretty one,’ she does feel better when she believes that she looks good, although what ‘looking good’ is to her differs in many ways from cultural norms).

While feminist writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde does recognize that “each woman responds to the crisis that breast cancer brings to her life out of a whole pattern, which is the design of who she is and how her life has been lived,” she argues that women

should take the activist position of making their experience with cancer visible. Lorde rejects the idea of women trying to feel better by tending to their appearances, and dismisses that such an approach can be productive:

To imply to a woman that, yes, she can be the 'same' as before surgery, with the skillful application of a little puff of lambswool and/or silicone gel, is to place an emphasis upon prosthesis which encourages her not to deal with herself as physically and emotionally real, even though altered and traumatized. This emphasis upon the cosmetic after surgery reinforces this society's stereotype of women, that we are only what we look or appear, so this is the only aspect of our existence we need to address ... The attitude towards prosthesis after breast cancer is an index of this society's attitudes towards women in general as decoration and externally defined sex objects ... Prosthesis offer the empty comfort that 'Nobody will know the difference.' But it is the very difference which I wish to affirm, because I have lived it, and survived it, and wish to share that strength with other women. [Lorde 1980:58–62]

Lochlann S. Jain furthers this argument:

The focus on pink and breasts and comfort may be, quite simply, a convenient way to displace sheer terror: after all, what would it mean to really acknowledge — really acknowledge — the fact that 41,000 people each year die of a disease from which one literally rots from the inside out with no cure while so many known causes continue to be pumped into the environment? ... The point is not simply to eradicate the shame that has for centuries accompanied the disease, but also to acknowledge the ugliness of the disease and of the suffering it causes and to let that suffering be okay, not because it is okay but because that is what we have. I draw a space in which cancer can be brought out of the closet in a way that it is not about comforting ourselves and each other, and that is not about righteous anger but, rather, is a space of mourning and a space that allows for the agency and material humanity of suffering and death ... I grapple with these issues in disentangling the alliances between breasts and gender and how their disengagements have been marked and framed through various modes representing beauty, shock, and shame. [Jain 2007:505–507]

I do not support the shaming of bodies in any way, or the association between particular body types and gender ideals, and although I agree that a space for mourning needs to be permitted and accepted, I am left wondering: for those women who have not had a similar education to Lorde and Jain, but find themselves in the really difficult situation of having cancer, what helps them cope? Much of what these scholars contribute is insightful and productive—my apprehension is not with their ethical positions against 'the system,' I agree with them there—but I think the issue is one of access to knowledge and how we must grasp at and grapple with what we know in order to find meaning (see Swindler 2001; Scheper-Hughes 2000:225). For Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah,

and even Gaya, tending to their appearances, often in ways that upheld hegemonic discourses of gender and beauty, made their bodies and lives meaningful in positive ways that were beneficial and empowering. While Lorde and Jain may have found aspects of their cancer journey to be sexist and oppressive, not every woman has the same experience of cancer or attributes the same meaning to those experiences. Must feminism, subjectivity, agency and wigs, makeup, prosthesis, breast reconstruction, or even pink (being a signifier of “femininity” and the colour of the breast cancer ribbon) be mutually exclusive? If living up to gendered body ideals is meaningful for some women, then is judging and condemning their choices as “trivial” justifiable? Beauty ideals can be limited and limiting, as can gender expectations, but every person has a unique experience of cancer. Therefore, should we not recognize every woman’s approach to finding meaning, hope, and strength? I would also argue that Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Gaya—who did, in certain ways and to varying degrees, “cover up” their cancer through the utilization of makeup, wigs, prosthesis, and reconstructive surgery—are still aware of how they have changed as individuals and what they have learned. Although there may be some measure of privacy or self-consciousness about their bodies, they are willing and proud to share their strength with others, for they have shared it with me, they will share it with all who read this paper, and I’m sure with many others whom they know or will meet along the way.

It is not reasonable to expect every woman to have the same response to cancer, or ethical to place the requirement upon them of having to be a crusading activist and moral pioneer (Rapp 2000). There can be agency in inaction (or different types of action). By not deliberately making their cancer visible in order to actively raise public awareness and fight for the cause, Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Gaya—who were separated from their everyday lives by cancer and entered the dangerous yet powerful liminal space of serious illness—were able to re-join their meaningful, enjoyable worlds where they were not solely defined by having cancer, or constantly reminded of their cancer experience, and where life was, and continues to be, worth living with those whom they love (see Turner 1977). These women are not disempowered.

Cancer can be understood as a moment of rupture where the body becomes “other,” and thus attending to one’s appearance in ways that are meaningful to the individual can be a means of recolonizing and recoding their bodies as “me.” In this way, attempts to reinscribe something familiar are not moments of victimhood, but rather agentive acts for these women who are actively evaluating, reclaiming, and maintaining their identity. This performance of gender and beauty is actually the work of persons who are more aware of who they are, what matters to them, and how they want to live their lives. From the liminal place of cancer they emerge with a heightened reflexive sense of self. Through reincorporation they become masters of their own identities and bring about a finality that they can live with. Wearing makeup or a wig, using a prosthesis, or having reconstructive surgery can be acts of self-authoring in pursuit of freedom.

NORICA I’m tired of feeling like I’m trapped inside my own body. It’s time for me to reclaim or rebuild or undo all the stuff that’s been done to it . . . I’m not that concerned about esthetics. I’m more concerned that I look tired, that I don’t

have that spark. It's missing in my eyes ... I think if I step back and think about everything — when I was a kid growing up, the magazines, health and all that — I think people buy into the idea that we are supposed to look a certain way, but when something hits, when it comes right down to it, it's health, not appearance, that matters.

RUTH I believe my self-esteem is better now than it was before treatment. I feel like I am allowed to be older and that beauty is less of a requirement. But I guess I'm a bit conflicted because I do use expensive anti-aging creams — I don't want more wrinkles than I already have. But being attractive was very important to me before and now I feel like my appearance is less central in my appreciation of self. Although I do feel better when I look good, after cancer and cancer treatment I am able to feel confident and competent and powerful without feeling like I look beautiful. I feel more grounded now and less concerned with my body and I'm more in touch with other parts of myself." She later elaborated, "I'm no longer as concerned about wearing the nicest expensive business clothes and having my hair styled perfectly or makeup on perfectly. I'm not as concerned about my appearance in general. And I'm *certainly* not concerned about how attractive I am to men in general. This is a phase in my life where I get to focus on the inside of me. I'll address getting my strength back from a similar place ... how I feel. I want to feel strong and flexible and fit. Not sure how it will look when I reach that feeling, and I don't really care ... When I disclose my cancer I feel proud and accomplished. And I hope that if someone has a story they will know that they can share it with me. When I share about my cancer I feel like people should applaud me. That was some tough shit to get through. And it's not over until the reconstruction is done and all these side effects from radical surgery sort themselves out (with a little help from the therapies).

ELIZABETH It was rather strange not to have two breasts, but for me, having them both was not a defining factor of who I am as a person. Would I rather not to have lost the breast at all, absolutely, but again keeping it was not a viable option. My attitude was more about moving forward and not dwelling over what had happened. I might say that I am connected more to my body now, as I try to focus on having my 'inner beauty' shine forth.

SARAH I cannot tell you how good it feels to feel well. I never even thought about it before in my life. To feel hungry and want to eat, to feel well after I've eaten, to feel so good about walking, to go to the gym for this cardio stretch and tone and enjoy it and want to swing my arms as hard as I can swing them. I feel so good. Just a few months ago I couldn't have done this! I feel so happy my body is my body. I'm happy with my hair. It's whiter than it was but I love it. I love the curls in it, I was lucky to get it like that. I certainly have more wrinkles but I still wear the makeup." She later expressed, "I do not feel ashamed about having cancer. Almost the opposite. I now feel I have a much greater understanding of facing death and

illness and suffering. I would be much more comfortable visiting someone who is very sick now. I have been there and I have some idea of what they are dealing with. It has added a whole segment to my life.

GAYA I do not feel less or more feminine after surgery. It was more a restoring to how things used to be, but I was already on the journey of moving away from looks in order to feel good about myself. That's why I was comfortable keeping my hair short and not colouring it. I was happy to renounce, like, 'I don't need this anymore, thank God.' It was a burden before, all that stuff that is easy and natural to do when you're younger. On the other hand, after cancer, your eyes sparkle. It's like, 'Okay, we gonna take your hair, and give you some pounds, but you gonna get really wise. Simple.' I feel bad for people who have gone through life threatening illness and did not change. All that for nothing ... I now know for sure that I'm not my body, I just live inside. I've been watching parts of it cut off and I'm still here. It's a temporary house. You don't own it but you can stay in here through this lifetime. I have so much more respect for it. In the beginning I felt a sense of betrayal — this is not a safe home if this happened. Now I'm thinking I have more respect for the body, the way I recovered and healed. I'm definitely more honest with it. There is more acceptance of its abilities and disabilities. I'm really happy to have it. I see the separation between who I am and what my body is. I knew that's how it should be, from my studies of yoga, but now I'm really experiencing it. It would be great if people would listen, really listen, to someone who is going through illness. First, because they could better help that person, and second, they could learn for themselves. It's almost like you can learn from someone else's adversities and travels — you can enrich your own life.

Concluding remarks

Meeting Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Gaya and discussing cancer, appearance, and identity with them has been a transformative experience. I have learned so much from all of them about the time of illness, the different ways that people cope with the trauma of cancer, the connection between how we look and our sense of self, and I have come to understand my relationship to beauty and gender ideals in new ways. I have developed a greater appreciation for my own body and the bodies of others. I am so grateful for all that these women have shared.

My review of the literature suggests that the locus of cancer and appearance has yet to be adequately acknowledged or explored within anthropology. This is surprising given the prevalence of: international organizations such as Look Good Feel Better and Gilda's Club; the information provided by cancer societies on the physical side effects of cancer treatments and products and methods meant to assist in minimizing them; the countless books, websites, and blogs offering advice on how to care for one's body and manage one's physical appearance during treatment. Perhaps this is because beauty is considered a "trivial aspect of the human condition" and thus "anthropology has rarely theorized human beauty as a distinct domain of social and psychological experience" (Edmonds

2010:17, 2008:151; see also Wolf 1990:9). Those considered to be women's discourses are often "trivialized, devalued, and dismissed" (Furman 1997:34). However, for Norica, Ruth, Elizabeth, Sarah, Gaya, and myself, the embodied experience of our outward appearance has not been insignificant, and I can attest that ideals of beauty and gender have a real impact on people's lives.

My goal has been to acknowledge and affirm the lived realities of participants during their battle with cancer and offer them an opportunity to tell their stories of the daily experiences of living with serious illness and how the physical effects of treatments on the body inform their sense of self. I strive to contribute to the literature on cancer by broadening the conversation to include what many may dismiss as trivial — appearance and beauty.

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Notes

- 1 A lumpectomy differs from a biopsy in that a biopsy involves the extraction of a small sampling of tissues for examination, whereas a lumpectomy requires the removal of a lump or malignant tumour. A lumpectomy, in comparison to a mastectomy (the partial or complete removal of one or both breasts — oftentimes the skin in addition to the tissue), is commonly considered to be a means of "breast conservation."
- 2 Laparoscopy is an operation performed through small incisions, typically with the aid of a camera, in the abdomen or pelvic region. In Sarah's case this type of surgery was required in order to remove both her ovaries (the medical term being oophorectomy or ovariectomy). Laparoscopy allows for complex surgery with minimal cutting and reduced recovery time.
- 3 In Gaya's case fat and the connected blood vessels called deep inferior epigastric perforators (DIEP) were surgically removed from her lower abdomen and transferred to her chest in order to reconstruct her breasts without using silicone implants. In Gaya's words, "They kept all this skin but they gut out the breast and use the flesh from the stomach to stuff up your new breasts. They did get rid of the nipples. My nipples are not the original ones." When the fat required for this type of breast reconstruction is removed from the abdomen a tummy tuck is often performed at the same time. For Gaya this whole procedure required twelve consecutive hours of surgery.
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The Landscape Imagination

Intersecting historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism

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This article considers how the research programmes of historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism may be combined and intersected to better describe the cultural understandings, agencies, and intentionalities that underlie the processes of landscape transformation in Amazonia. These research programmes will be discussed and interrelated towards points of contiguity and conjuncture. Historical-ecological research investigates the changing relationships between human beings and their landscapes across time. In particular, it considers historical examples of landscape transformations, which are anthropogenically derived environmental changes. Amerindian-perspectivist research investigates the relationships between human beings and other species within the cosmologies of Amerindian societies in the Amazon and elsewhere. The combination of these currently regnant approaches to ethnographic research among Amerindian societies provides new opportunities to better theorize the cultural contexts for the anthropogenic actions that lead to landscape transformations in the past and present. It also provides new opportunities to better describe how cosmological understandings are grounded in the processes that articulate human beings with their broader ecological contexts. This article considers these intersections and calls for further research with Amerindian societies that combines historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism.

KEY WORDS Amazonia, Amerindian perspectivism, historical ecology, imagination

Historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism are both regnant theoretical approaches in the contemporary anthropology of Amazonia. These two approaches have developed from distinct intellectual origins and constitute different orientations to the field. However, they are neither mutually exclusive nor unrelated.¹ The intersection of these theoretical approaches constitutes an open area for future research. Although tentative efforts have been made to bridge the theoretical divide, scholars have remained primarily rooted in one or the other theoretical approach. An intersectional approach to historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism that focuses on cultural understandings of the ecological, social, and cosmological relations between ontological entities is proposed in this article. These relations articulate, that is, interconnect and weave together, the landscape with the cultural ideas and practices of a particular society. The goal of research using this intersectional approach is to elucidate the contemporary

structural frameworks of what I refer to as *landscape imagination* in a society. The landscape imagination consists of the categorical relations and ideational content, that is, the structure,² that inform a society's intervention into its landscape; both the agency and the intentionality of the society may be expressed, although not determined, in and through the landscape imagination.

Landscape imagination does not determine landscape intervention. Rather it provides a set of relations and ideas from which the society takes influence. Furthermore, the structural frameworks that constitute it, that is, the relations and ideas, change over time in dialectic accord with continuing landscape interventions and the landscape transformations that result from the latter. Although these frameworks are mutable, they may still prove useful at times in interpreting the motivations and cultural intentions underlying anthropogenic landscape transformations in the past.

Further research is needed to understand how landscape imagination informs the practices that result in landscape transformation; further research is also needed to understand how previous landscape transformations, which involve the replacement of one set of beings by another set of beings (Balée 2006:85–87), influence structural frameworks. Balée (2006:82) has explained that historical ecology does not synthesize nature and culture; rather, it studies the reiterative dialectic interface between the two sets of domains. Towards this end, theoretical bridges are needed between historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. The goal of this article is to create a bridge to connect this theoretical divide and to ascertain the contour of an inductive research programme that is concerned with elucidating the structural frameworks of landscape imagination.³

Organization of the argument

This article will begin with a description of the theoretical approaches known as historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism; this will be followed by an attempt to show how these approaches can be fruitfully combined. The subsequent section consists of an exploration of the concept of *landscape imagination* and how it fits into an intersectional approach that attempts to bridge the theoretical divide. The term *structure* will then be discussed in relation to its use in the sense that the landscape imagination is constituted by *structural frameworks*. Finally, this article will consider how the landscape imagination can be inductively uncovered and how this kind of research may further our understanding of the intentionality underpinning previous landscape transformations.

Historical ecology

Historical ecology goes beyond the “standard model” of Amazonian anthropology (Viveiros de Castro 1996:180–192) by viewing human societies as agents within their ecological milieu (Balée 1998, 2006; Erickson 2008). The adaptationist view of the *standard model* posited a “determining action of the environment” on Amazonian cultures and societies (Viveiros de Castro 1996:180). Julian Steward (1946–1950) and Betty Meggers (1954) are most associated with the cultural ecological position that Amazonian societies are environmentally limited and characterized by cultural adaptation to a static environment. Viveiros

de Castro (1996:186) refers to this position as the Steward–Meggers model. Meggers (1954:806) describes Steward’s (1946–1950) analytical division of South American societies (such as Tropical Forest Tribes and Andean Civilizations) as being “one of the most remarkable demonstrations available of the limiting effect of environment on culture.” The emergence of historical ecology as a theoretical approach to Amazonian anthropology is positioned in the history of ideas in the context of the (environmentally) deterministic views of cultural ecology. Historical ecology represents a radical break with this determinism.

Historical ecology emphasizes the *relationship* between human societies and the landscapes with which they interact (Balée 1994:1). This relationship is “manifest” in the anthropogenic landscape (Crumley 1994:9), which provides historical ecology with a “holistic unit of study and analysis” (Balée and Erickson 2006:3). The holism derives from the intersections of nature and culture and from the realization that much of “nature” has been formed and reformed through cultural processes. Clark Erickson (2008:158) writes that “[h]istorical ecology focuses on *landscape* as the medium created by human agents through their interaction with the environment.” This concept of landscape can be understood as the register of human effects on the environment or as a cultural representation of the environment. The concept of landscape is polysemous; my understanding of it is derived from both Kant and Hegel. I treat the concept of landscape in Kantian fashion as a domain of empirical reality that is cognized as a mental synthesis of the sensory awareness of the observer and the categories that structure these empirical sensations (Kant 2003). I treat it in Hegelian fashion as a dialectically changing domain of culture, which Hegel discussed in the terminology of spirit or *geist* (Hegel 1977, 1989).

Rather than relying on cultural ecology’s dualistic view of nature/culture, historical ecology views this relationship as being dialectical (Balée 1995:97, 1998:4, 1999:25, Crumley 1994:9). This implies that, whilst landscapes affect cultures, landscapes are also affected by cultures. Neither determines the other. Campbell et al. (2006:21) claim that “human culture and the environment mutually influence each other.” Whilst the primary focus of cultural ecology was the influence of the environment on societies, the primary focus of historical ecology has been the influence of societies and cultures on the environment and the production of landscapes.

A fully dialectical approach is needed. Balée and Erickson (2006:9) have written of a “historical ecology of knowledge” that “reveals the means by which changes in the environment induced by humans actually condition subsequent generations in terms of language, technology, and culture.” In transforming the landscape, societies transform their own cultural frameworks. The influence of human societies on the landscape will dialectically result in the influence of the landscape on these societies. Balée and Erickson claim that societies that have historically transformed their landscapes possess:

a distinctive and historically defined way of knowing the environment that has its origins in the particular relationship it [the society] has had over time to local landscapes and to their metamorphosis at human hands. In other words, environmental knowledge is contingent on interactions people experience over time with their landscape. [2006:9]

Balée (2003, 2009, 2010) has explored landscape histories and how contemporary cultural knowledge indexes historical transformations and trajectories. He writes that:

The current state of landscape knowledge possessed by folk (caboclo) and indigenous peoples of Amazonia is, in part, a product of history. As the landscapes have changed through time, and continue to change, that knowledge, too, shows increments in some domains, losses in others. Such losses and increments of landscape knowledge are reflected in vocabulary changes, just as vocabulary can be used as an index, however crude, to knowledge of the past state of Amazonian landscapes. [Balée 2009:33]

Cultural knowledge of the landscape emerges and reemerges from landscape transformation. Since the vocabulary of landscape knowledge refers to the entities of the landscape, this cultural knowledge is shown to be contingent upon the ontological entities that are presented within the landscape.⁴ Thus, the structural frameworks of landscape-imagination are reiteratively reformulated partially through the successions of organisms that result from landscape transformations (Balée 2006:83).

Although historical ecology provides conceptual tools for the holistic study of the relationships between humans, their landscapes, and their knowledges, the position of this theoretical approach within the history of ideas has resulted in an emphasis on disproving the previous thesis of the “standard model” that culture is environmentally determined or limited. Thus, historical ecologists have been particularly concerned with evidence for anthropogenic transformations, such as Amazonian Dark Earth (ADE), mounds and other earthworks, and forest management (Erickson 2008). These findings signify that Amazonian societies were not limited by environmental conditions; rather, these societies were able to act upon the environment to transform the landscape and its composition — with regard to species, topography, carrying capacity, hydrology, et cetera (Erickson 2008). The success of historical-ecological researchers is made evident in Viveiros de Castro’s (1996:180) description of the “standard model” as obsolete. Even Donald Lathrap’s (1968; Pärssinen et al. 2009) more nuanced position on cultural ecology has now been largely superseded.

Now that the “standard model” has been surpassed, there is great need to direct research to the other side of the dialectic, which is the place where landscape-influenced knowledges are dialectically sublated and become part of the structural frameworks of landscape imagination that inform further landscape transformations. This requires the study of these knowledges in the midst of ongoing landscape transformations. There is also a need to understand how cultural knowledges and ontologies inform the activities that occur in relation to the environment. There have been steps in this direction. Loretta Cormier (2006:356) writes that, for the Guajá, “subsistence strategy is intricately integrated with their social and cosmological orders.” Laura Rival (2002:xx) has noted the influence of culture on societal movements within the landscape; she claims that a society’s relationship to the landscape can be a “social relation” through time. Beyond this, the dialectical relationships between societies and landscapes are embedded within a series of ontological relations between a multitude of entities; these ontological relations articulate diverging domains (cosmological worlds, societies, and landscapes) and the entities which

inhabit them (spirits, humans, and plants/animals). Amerindian perspectivism provides the necessary conceptual tools for understanding these ontological relations.

Amerindian perspectivism

Amerindian perspectivism is centred on the set of cosmological belief systems belonging to indigenous societies in the Amazon. Although there are claims that the perspectivist worldview is shared across the New World societies, as well as parts of Siberia and elsewhere (Fausto 2007:498, 500; Viveiros de Castro 1998:471; Willerslev 2004), the main locus of research within this framework has been Amazonia. The central tenet of Amerindian perspectivism is that one's viewpoint, i.e., one's "perspective," is either affected, conditioned, or determined by the type of body within which one resides (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470–471, 478).⁵ This argument has led to the development of a literature concerned with the nature of the relationship between the body and the soul in Amazonian cosmologies. Much of this literature, which is heavily centred on the body as a frame of reference, is concerned with how ontological entities (spirits, humans, and plants/animals) relate to one another and the ideas that have developed about these interrelations (Fausto 1997; Vilaça 2002, 2005).

There is considerable debate as to the relationship between the body and the soul in Amazonia. This is reflected in the different (sometimes mutually contradicting) positions that are taken regarding the issue (Fausto 1997; Lima 1999, 2000; Rival 2005; Rivière 1974, 1994, 1997; Taylor 1996; Vilaça 2002, 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998).⁶ Elsewhere, I have attempted to analytically divide these positions on the body and soul into the following categories: (1) the duality of body and soul; (2) the soul as a body; (3) the soul as a perspective; and (4) the soul as a bodily capacity (Whitaker forthcoming). In addition to these, there seems to be another position present in the literature; this could perhaps be termed "the soul as a social mirror" (Whitaker forthcoming). It is best associated with the work of Anne Christine Taylor (1996) and Laura Rival (2005). Needless to say, the literature on the ontology of the soul in Amazonian cosmologies is quite multifaceted. For the discussion at hand, the significance of the status of the soul in Amazonian cosmologies relates to the need to theoretically comprehend the ontological entities of Amazonian cosmology, their relations with other entities, and the ideational content that attaches to these entities and their relations. Research into Amazonian pneumatologies and ontologies uncovers the relationships that are culturally posited between entities vis-à-vis the soul, which I have noted has several meanings in the Amazonian literature, and the characteristics of such entities. For historical ecology, Amazonian pneumatologies and ontologies help to elucidate the unpredictable cultural connections that are drawn between entities in the landscape and those in the domains of society and cosmology.

Between historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism

Whilst historical ecology in Amazonia is primarily concerned with how these societies have transformed their immediate physical worlds in a variety of ways and in response to a variety of stimuli, Amerindian perspectivism is primarily concerned with how these societies understand the spiritual and ontological relationships between entities existing

in this physical world. Undoubtedly, these understandings affect their actions in the physical world and must be influenced by the physical world as it exists and as they have made it. Furthermore, there must be links between the domains of landscape and cosmology.

Aparecida Vilaça (2002) has expanded analysis of the “production of kinship” to connect the domestic with the cosmological, which implies an extension of social relations to the ontological entities of cosmology. Laura Rival (2002:xx) has expanded the analysis of landscape–society interaction to incorporate the concept of “social relations” as a mediation of such interactions. The expansion of the kinship domain to include the zoological entities of the landscape was previously achieved by Loretta Cormier (2003; 2006). Theresa Miller (2010:74) has explored perspectival interactions between humans and plants; unlike perspectival interactions between humans and animals, those between humans and plants are generally thought to be non-predatory. This implies that the structure of ontological relations between different domains of entities may be discontinuous. Categorical relations exist between societies and the ontological entities of cosmology and the landscape. Analyses of landscape transformation should be expanded to explore how the categorical relations and ideational content of the structural frameworks that constitute the landscape imagination are applied and subsequently reformulated in the contexts of such transformations. This involves a dialectical relationship between the application (thesis) of cultural knowledges to landscapes, the alteration (antithesis or negation) of the categories and schemata of these knowledges by the changes evidenced in the differential presencing of beings — for example, the succession of organisms (Balée 2006:83) — in the landscape, and the reformulation (synthesis) of cultural knowledge to account for the changes made by transformation.

William Balée’s (2010:169) use of the Greek terms *physis* (φύσις) and *nomos* (νόμος) is insightful for an intersectional approach that seeks to bridge historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. He differentiates “the emic perception of *physis* (“what exists and grows itself”)” from “the presumed *nomos* (what human societies create, infer, and envision to underlie things).” He writes further that “[t]hose spiritual dimensions of traditional Amazonian knowledge systems, however, limited in number, are always cloaked in the skins, or envelopes, of more or less familiar animals and plants” (Balée 2010:169). In addition to souls and spirits, the cosmological systems of Amazonian societies make references to the entities empirically observed in the physical world — the “bodies” that influence (to whatever degree specified) “perspectives” mostly possess referents in the physical world, such as animals, plants, and humans.⁷ An intersectional approach that bridges historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism must strive to consider both *physis* and *nomos* in its research programme. For such an approach, the emics of *physis* are informed by the interpretations stemming from *nomos*.

Rival (2002:180) argues that historical ecologists should consider “religious ideas about life and death. For it is with such ideas in their minds that they have become ecological and historical agents of change.” This claim certainly suggests the possibility of bridging historical-ecological concern with landscape transformation and Amerindian-perspectivist concern with cosmology and ontology in the manner that I have described. However, I would hedge slightly with regard to Rival’s claim. Whilst it is likely that cosmological ideas generally have influenced landscape-transforming practices, it cannot be taken for granted that they always have done so. Balée (2010:168, emphasis added) writes that “[i]ndigenous

societies of the past had altered (that is, transformed) environments without *necessarily* regarding the spiritual and intellectual contents found in them.” Historical ecologists working in historic or pre-historic contexts may not have enough data to ascertain what influence cosmology had on indigenous actions. Such influence, as Balée notes, cannot be assumed *a priori*. Nevertheless, it may be possible to discern such influence when dealing with more shallow time depths. Ascertaining structural frameworks as interpretive models is necessary in this regard; the extent of subsequent interpretive possibilities remains an open-ended question at present.

Historical ecology, Amerindian perspectivism, and the structure of landscape imagination

In the literature on imagination there is a dual treatment of the term as an activity of the analyst’s gaze and as a process underpinning societal and individual activity; in both cases, imagination implies a Kantian faculty for “manifesting the inchoate” (Whitaker 2011).⁸ According to Crumley (1994:9), the dialectical landscape/society relationship, which is inchoate inasmuch as it is continuously being holistically resynthesized, is manifest in the landscape through time. The landscape, as an Hegelian domain of culture (knowledge) (Hegel 1977, 1989) and a Kantian synthesis of category and sensation (Kant 2003), is both mediated through the structural frameworks of the imagination, that is the categorical relations between ontological entities and attached ideational contents, and exists as an empirical reality that constrains the cultural constructions to which it is fit. Sneath et al. (2009:11–12) provide a Kantian definition of imagination as “the ability to bring to mind that which is not entirely present to the senses.” This is the basis of my definition of the concept. I prefer my definition because it provides for a more dialectical (and historical-ecological) application of the concept; in other words, it potentially combines the mental registration of phenomena with the activity of externalizing categorical relations into empirical reality through societal or individual action and intervention. As a faculty for interpolating and re-sorting inchoate things, the concept of imagination is being used in the Kantian sense that Collingwood (1946) and Sneath et al. (2009) have earlier adopted. Kant (2003:60; Sneath et al. 2009:12) describes imagination as “a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no cognition whatever, but of the working of which we are seldom even conscious.” This cognitive and process-oriented manner of treating imagination (Sneath et al. 2009) contrasts with the usage of several anthropologists, such as Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Vincent Crapanzano (2004), who have taken to treating the imagination as synonymous with culture (Sneath et al. 2009:5–7). The approach taken here, which is both Kantian and Hegelian, combines the two tendencies mentioned.

I view the imagination as both a faculty of cognition and a dialectic of culture. It is partially structured through both culture and cognition whilst being constituted by domains of categorical relations and ideational content. Thus, the landscape imagination is both Kantian (synthetic) and Hegelian (dialectical) (Kant 2003; Hegel 1977, 1989). Although its cognitive nature as a faculty transcends culture, its appearance within a context of action is dialectically informed by a given culture in the context within which it exhibits effects. I argue that landscape interventions (and the transformations that emerge from them)

are examples of “imaginative effects” (Sneath et al. 2009:19). They are the visible actions (and effects), that is, the manifestations that have sensory perceptability, of a human society’s structured interventions within a world of inchoate things and ontological registries. Through dialectical sublation, the landscape imagination informs the actions that produce these effects and is subsequently reformulated.

The imagination is not determined by the effects that are wrought from its application through action, that is, “imaginative effects.” Following Castoriadis (1987), Sneath et al. (2009:6, 24) write that “the imagination can be defined in terms of its irreducibly indeterminate relationship to the processes that precipitate it.” In the context of this paper, I understand this to mean that the imagination, in this case the landscape imagination, is not determined, but rather influenced, by the transformed landscapes that it has acted upon. Furthermore, the structural frameworks that constitute the landscape imagination do not determine, but rather inform, the activities that participate⁹ in the landscape imagination, as a set of relations and ideas. As was noted, it cannot be claimed that all activities in the landscape necessarily participate in the landscape imagination (Balée 2010:168). I argue that this concept of *landscape imagination* provides a means of bridging historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism. It provides a way of conceptualizing how cultural knowledge may pattern landscape transformation by informing the activities that lead to intervention and that are inscribed on the landscape as “imaginative effects.”

The concept of structure

I have repeatedly used the terms *structure* and *structural* in referring to an organization of the landscape imagination. The structural frameworks of the landscape imagination can only be accessed through language and are posited as discursively asserted relations between entities in deictic worlds.¹⁰ Thus, as with other writers who have used the term *structure* in various ways, I am influenced by linguistics.¹¹ However, my usage of the term gives ample room for agency, practice, and discourse. My use of the term implies neither cultural nor material determinism. It also does not imply a static semantic field. Rather, the structural frameworks of the landscape imagination are discursively presented through deixis. They are reiteratively changed through agentive landscape transformation.¹² They may also differ between individuals in a society. The extent of the latter is unclear.

My usage of the term *structure* differs from that of Lévi-Strauss. Rather than emphasizing binary oppositions between abstract terms in the culture, I am interested in the structure of relationships that are posited between ontological entities in the domains of landscape, kinship, and cosmology. As such, my use of the term *structure* pertains more to a social anthropological emphasis on *social relations*, although in this case these are mostly cosmological social relations between human and non-human entities, and the ideas that describe them. However, these ontological relations and ideational contents are mutable and are transformed dialectically in the process of landscape transformation. As the presencing of entities in the world changes through landscape transformations, the ontological relations change and subsequently the landscape imagination changes, albeit in unpredictable and irreducible ways. Landscape imagination is a recurrently changing social product and structure is not static.

Uncovering the structure of landscape imagination: interpreting intentionality

The ultimate goal of this intersectional approach that combines historical ecology with Amerindian perspectivism is to discover the social relations and ideational contents that connect the three domains (landscape, society, and cosmology) and that constitute the structural frameworks of landscape imagination. The incorporation of non-human entities into human worlds (and vice-versa) is ubiquitous in the texts of Amerindian perspectivism (Fausto 2007; Vilaça 2002, 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998). Both historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism reformulate the earlier division of nature and culture, albeit in different ways, and are concerned with human interactions with non-human entities. The intersectional approach understands the dialectical relationships between society and landscape as embedded within the cosmological relations that are culturally posited in ontologies. These relations, along with the ideas that accompany them, constitute the structural frameworks of the landscape imagination. The intersectional approach highlights the structure of the landscape imagination and how it both informs and is influenced by landscape interventions and transformations.

According to Ian Hodder (1982:7) there has been a division between those who view culture normatively, as something that patterns and perhaps constrains observed behaviour, and those who view culture processually, as something that emerges from material processes. Hodder (1982:12) argues that “symbols do not ‘reflect’ but... [rather] they play an active part in forming and giving meaning to social behaviour.” The intersectional approach that I have put forward is less concerned with “symbols,” *per se*, and more concerned with social relations between ontological entities. However, I share with Hodder the view that social behaviour is informed by cultural understandings. Within the present context, this implies that the interaction between societies and landscapes in Amazonia is mediated through the kinds of ontological and cosmological relations that Amerindian perspectivism posits.

The combination of historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism, through the elucidation of structural frameworks, may come to facilitate interpretations of the intentionality and agency that underpinned (pre)historic landscape transformations. Carlos Fausto (2002) has used research on ontological beliefs among the Parakanã to interpret their earlier history of contact with Europeans. Much earlier, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1973:384) wrote that:

[W]hilst the Spanish were dispatching inquisitional commissions to investigate whether the natives had a soul or not, these very natives were busy drowning the white people they had captured in order to find out, after lengthy observation, whether or not the corpses were subject to putrefaction. [Quoted in Viveiros de Castro 1998:475]¹³

Understanding the cultural knowledges that informed such actions requires comprehension of indigenous ontologies and cosmologies. Although it must be remembered that structure is not static, an intersectional approach that combines historical ecology and Amerindian perspectivism may facilitate a greater comprehension of the cultural knowledges that informed actions in the past. As such, synchronic research may provide the structural frameworks for interpreting diachronic data, whether ethnohistorical or archaeological.¹⁴

Notes

- 1 Historical ecology has emerged from a critique of the earlier theoretical framework of cultural ecology and emphasizes the agency of human beings in transforming, rather than merely adapting to, their ecological milieus. Amerindian perspectivism has emerged from the Lévi-Straussian theoretical framework of structuralism and seeks to understand the relationships between human beings and other entities (both natural and supernatural) within the cosmologies of Amerindian cultures.
- 2 This is not structure in the sense of Lévi-Strauss. The phrase “categorical relations” does not signify abstract relations between terms. Rather, it signifies “social relations” between entities in the domains of landscape, society, and cosmology. I have included a section below that further explains my use of the term structure.
- 3 Early indications of the possibility of connecting landscapes with the cultural knowledges that inform their anthropogenic emergence and that they subsequently reshape were implicitly present in the stated possibility of an “historical ecology of knowledge” (Balée and Erickson 2006:9).
- 4 In terms of human encounters with culturally differentiated ontological entities in the landscape, that is, plants and animals, the experience of the landscape is phenomenological in the sense of Martin Heidegger (2010).
- 5 It is important to note that the theory of Amerindian perspectivism is a theoretical model of indigenous belief systems. It is not a philosophy that argues that the world is epistemologically or ontologically one certain way versus another. Rather, it is a theory that certain indigenous groups possess belief systems that have philosophical attributes that relate to what Western philosophy has termed a perspectivist framework. It is a theory about indigenous philosophies and cosmologies.
- 6 Not all of the authors listed in this regard should be assumed to adhere to the perspectivist theoretical framework. Peter Rivière is almost certainly not a perspectivist and Laura Rival’s adherence to the framework seems to be less than total. Rivière and Viveiros de Castro hold opposing views in the literature. Viveiros de Castro (1998:482) openly contradicts Rivière in his major publication on perspectivist theory. In a later publication, Rivière (2000:264) calls into question Viveiros de Castro’s emphasis on predation.
- 7 However, the referential character of these systems is not necessarily wholly one of representing physical entities. Viveiros de Castro (1998:481) has argued that “[a] bundles of affects and sites of perspective, rather than material organisms, bodies ‘are’ souls, just, incidentally, as souls and spirits ‘are’ bodies.” If Viveiros de Castro’s claim is to be accepted — it is far from certain that it is agreed upon by other scholars — there are several consequences. First, it implies that the mechanism of influence between the body and the perspective is not necessarily material or physical. Secondly, it implies that the referential character of the cosmological system relates to both one or more sets of physical categories (such as animals, plants, and humans) and to at least one set of categories present within the cosmological system — that is, the domain of the soul. Thus, cosmological categories in Amazonian thought may refer to either or both physical and/or non-physical cultural phenomena.
- 8 The exact extent to which landscape imagination is a part of culture and the extent to which it is a mental faculty, as per Kant, is unclear. I accept the notion that it is not cultural insofar as culture is understood as holistic (Sneath et al. 2009) and inasmuch as imagination, as a faculty, precedes the cultural categories that come to shape it; positing a non-holistic imagination as axiomatic facilitates an understanding that it has been reiteratively influenced and partially reshaped through landscape transformation. However, although imagination is not necessary holistic, it is partially submerged in the holism of the relationship between a society and its landscape. Thus, it is at least partially cultural.

- 9 My use of the term participation here is influenced by Plato's (1888) idea that worldly things correspond to transcendental forms; this idea was critiqued by Aristotle (1960) because the method and singularity of participation is somewhat unclear in Plato's work. I am using the concept of participation to highlight a dialectical relationship between nature and culture. I am not implying a metaphysical participation in the Platonic sense. Since the landscape imagination is dialectically related to previous landscape transformations, the activities that are informed by it participate both with the imagination and with the previous iterations of the manifested relationship. The method of participation is the encoding of cultural knowledge as the landscape is transformed (Balée 2006:77; Balée 2010:163); the singularity of participation is stable because the landscape is specified. The exact role of language in the process of participation remains unclear. Whilst it is clear that participation is encoded through language, it is less clear how language may mediate the processes whereby the landscape-imagination informs action.
- 10 It is no accident that the one of the most classic texts on perspectivism is entitled "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism" (Viveiros de Castro 1998).
- 11 Ferdinand de Saussure (1986:21) used the concepts of structure and system to define and theorize about language. My use of the term landscape imagination, as a categorical and ideational structure is influenced by de Saussure. In particular, it is influenced by his claim that "[t]he structure of a language is a social product of our language faculty" (de Saussure 1986:9). The Prague School linguistic theorists, particularly Jakobson and Trubetzkoy, refined the concept of structure and made it applicable to phonological data (D'Andrade 1995:17). These theorists were influential in the later adoption of the concept by Kenneth Pike (1967) and (also later) by the cognitive anthropologists (D'Andrade 1995:18–19). Claude Lévi-Strauss and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1950:122) were also apparently influenced by the trajectory of linguistic research (D'Andrade 1995:19). Lévi-Strauss (1963:33) saw certain aspects of a society's culture as being structural and unconscious; he noted Trubetzkoy's shift, in phonological research, "from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to study of their unconscious infrastructure." This emphasis on the unconscious character of structure is resonant with Kant's (2003:60) claim that the imagination's "working" is something "of which we are seldom even conscious."
- 12 Agentive landscape transformations are those anthropogenic environmental and ecological changes that are undertaken through the use of human agency.
- 13 For original context, see Levi-Strauss (1973:384).
- 14 Balée (2009:34) has pioneered historical linguistic work in this general direction; he writes that "one can utilize methods from historical linguistics in order to begin to build a model of landscape knowledge and the changes it underwent during thousands of years before the European conquest."

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A Nation in Transition

Examining relationships and precarity in Athens, Greece

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This paper aims to explore how the political and economic crisis in Greece has affected the social lives of young adults in Athens, paying particular attention to their position regarding relationships, marriage, and starting families. My aim in the outcome of this ethnography is to provide a greater understanding of the intersections of state and social life in periods of political and economic uncertainty as witnessed through the daily lives of my research participants.

KEY WORDS biopower, crisis, Greece, precarity

When I arrived in Athens, Greece in July of 2014, the state had already been experiencing four years of economic and political crisis, along with decades of varying degrees of uncertainty and instability. Neni Panourgiá paints a bleak picture, describing it as “this crisis which is not ‘becoming’ is not ‘progressive’, a crisis that came from ... the crudest capitalism that we have seen since the days of Manchester at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution” (2014). While the economy and politics were at the forefront of conversation among the public and the media during my time in Greece, I was instead interested in how the crisis was affecting the daily lives of the people who were living it. I decided to explore the social implications of such a crisis, specifically surrounding young adults like myself, focusing on their feelings towards relationships, marriage, and family. Research into these areas has exposed various instances of intersectionality between young adults in Greece, and their relationships with tradition, the state, and their place within a global economy.

Greece’s entrance into the European Union in the 1980s came about in the midst of an already unsteady economy. In Paxson’s *Making Modern Mothers*, she discusses the beginning of the end of the ‘traditional’ Greek family lifestyle during this time: “few women could afford to stay home with their children. It became clear to me that by the middle 1990s Athenian women were commonly questioning and second-guessing what they could expect of their lives in the workforce, in motherhood, in romance” (2004:06). Family numbers began to dwindle despite measures put in place by the Greek government to try and boost the population. Research done by Georgiadis shows that Greece continues to promote multi-child families with the constitution granting special privileges to families with four or more children since 1979, including pensions for mothers, reduced

transportation fees, lower electricity and water bills, and priority entry into state nurseries (2010:03). The government ministers “justify this type of support as crucial in light of Greece’s ‘demographic crisis’ or ‘underfertility’” (2010:03). These benefits are failing to persuade couples into reproducing; however, the Supreme Confederation of Multi-Child Parents of Greece (ASPE¹) citing “high levels of unemployment, women’s increased education and labour force participation, a large number of abortions, and growing levels of infertility” as the cause (2010:04). This information sets the scene of an already rapidly transforming landscape that will further shape and define the young adults who are left to grapple with its effects.

I chose persons between the ages of 18 and 30 as the primary participants for my research, generally using cafés and bars as my field site due to the higher number of young adults in these areas. The bulk of the data I collected came from one primary participant. I also gathered insight from a number secondary participants in Athens. The theoretical framework considered for this paper includes Foucault’s concept of biopower, which links the will of the state to the actions of its citizens. I broaden this definition beyond the conventional boundaries of the nation state and instead place it in a global context. I connect this idea with notions of transition, looking at which powers are influencing it and in what ways. I will introduce these ideas of change using metaphor as a way to highlight the shifting values and expectations among young adults in Athens. This paper concludes with a focus on the current precarity of Greece, how the young people are living without a sense of security or predictability, and the and reflects on the futures facing the state and its citizens.

Going for drinks — a methodology

I first met my key informant, Cassia, at a punk show near Exarcheia Square in Athens, Greece. Made famous as the anarchist district in Athens, you are as likely to see families out for dinner on a patio at midnight as you are to notice a quiet circle of pot smokers in an alley. As the show ended and the high energy crowd began to spill into the street I found Cassia and Amara, sitting on the curb in front of the club. The pair was the first set of young Greek adults I spoke with who seemed interested in a discussion about relationships as opposed to the typical conversations about unemployment rates, wage cuts, and poor political leaders. We chatted about the show and Canada and why I was in Athens, and they instantly became interested in the topic of my research. I discovered that both Amara and Cassia had university degrees in the social sciences — Amara from the United Kingdom and Cassia from Athens — which allowed them to easily relate to the material and understand the type of information I was looking for. After a brief outline of my project, they invited me to ask them anything I wanted. Unprepared for an interview, I asked a few broad questions and scribbled down notes on some scrap paper. At the end of the night they agreed to meet again for another set of interviews, and another night out. While this first meeting seemed at first to produce some predictable responses, it also introduced a range of contradictions I would later come across in interviews, such as the varying amount of significance placed on tradition and nationalism, which I will discuss further in this article.

Other informants I spoke with included a young man, Basil, who was going through a break-up during my time in Athens that he spoke about extensively. While his story was informative, the immediacy of his situation made him reluctant to answer any questions directly linked to my research. I was fortunate to have a lengthy conversation with an older Greek actress, Effie, who was unmarried and taught theatre to teenagers. Her experience made her a useful source of information both for current issues among youth as well as a historical narrative of how Athens has changed since the 1970s and 1980s until present day. Lastly I was able to have a brief but valuable conversation with Mary who was the only participant that was both married and with a child. These conversations took place in various locations around Athens, namely bars and restaurants in Exarcheia, Monastiraki, and Gazi.

Blood, water, and wine — Greek narratives of history and tradition

Many aspects of eating, drinking, and socializing in Greece were accompanied by narratives of custom and tradition. One evening while discussing the importance of these practices and their connection to relationships with Cassia and Amara, I asked whether they or their families would mind if they married a man who was not Greek. I was surprised when the both responded with a unanimous and definite ‘no’. This attitude seems to be a recent phenomenon, as previous ethnographies about Greece have emphasized metaphors of blood and nationalism (Herzfeld 2005; Paxson 2004). Herzfeld (2005) explores the history and significance of ‘Greek blood’ in his book *Cultural Intimacy*, stressing its ability to unite people, even where no direct family relation exists. He explains that the idea of ‘pure Greek blood’ has existed in its modern form for around 200 years with Greece’s separation from the Ottoman Empire as the cause. During this time it was helpful to emphasize a Greek national identity, strengthened by the metaphor of blood, to help unite the country (2005:111). It is a telling progression then that during my time in Athens, the metaphors used by my participants were not dominated by blood, as was the case in these early ethnographies, but water.

The images of water in Athens work like waves: a continuous cycle of pushing the young people away from Greece, and then inevitably pulling them back in again. Cassia stated one night in an offhanded way that, “Greece, the ship, has been sinking for forty years now, we haven’t hit rock bottom yet, but we’re very close.” This idea, likening a nation to a ship, was similarly used by Foucault, who mused

What does it mean to govern a ship? It means clearly to take charge of the sailors, but also of the boat and its cargo...to reckon with winds, rocks, and storms; and it consists in that activity of establishing a relation between the sailors who are being taken care of and the ship which is to be taken care of... [Foucault in Kazanjian 2003:114]

This vision combined with the image of Cassia’s sinking ship, points to an uneasiness with the leadership of Greece and its future. Later, a graduate student I met who had recently returned home to Athens described the youth as “abandoning ship” with the aid of their parents. This idea was reinforced by nearly all of the young people I spoke with mentioning their intentions to move, work, or attend school overseas.

While these images give the impression of escape, I found that water was also used to draw the youth back, in the form of baptism. I first realized the importance of baptism when Cassia commented that should she ever decide to get married she would have a religious wedding, regardless of her beliefs, so that any future children could be baptized. When I pressed her on the importance of baptism she provided some vague instance where an ex-boyfriend had some trouble in the army and then waved her comment aside insisting it was actually not such a big deal anymore. Effie was able to shed some light on how baptisms have persisted, explaining that although the feminist movement of the 1970s saw religious marriages being replaced by civil unions, baptisms were still required by law. Paxson explains that the name of a child could only be registered with the state through records of baptism which were legally required, with children being unable to enter the public school system without a certificate of baptism until 1983 (2004:123,166). Other major social obligations, such as the ceremonial naming of the godparents, reinforce the tradition's importance. Now, even as the laws have changed, the practice continues with wedding ceremonies sometimes only taking place so the child may be baptized. This persisting sense of social obligation appears to be one of the few anchors which continues to tie young adults and their future children to Greece.

And finally there is wine, or not just wine, but food and coffee and cigarettes; all accompanied by elaborate Greek narratives. The cultural significance of these items to my participants became vividly apparent when a friend James and I went for dinner and drinks with four Athenians at a restaurant that consisted of a few tables set up in an alley where we were assured the food would be delicious and 'authentically' Greek. After several plates containing various meats and vegetables arrived at the table, our companions began explaining how the meal was authentically Greek, as well as demonstrating the appropriate way to go about eating it; beginning with a single slice of tomato as a way to "cleanse the pallet." Meanwhile, James, laughing along believing they were detailed descriptions as opposed to instructions, innocently served himself some lamb and began to eat. He was quickly and not so-subtly chastised with the insistence that he stop what he was doing and follow instructions. Realizing this wasn't a joke, James awkwardly put his fork down, lamb still skewered on the end, and reached for a slice of tomato. It was during these times of intense illustrations of tradition, juxtaposed against a backdrop of young people expressing their discontent with Greece and their desire to seek opportunities elsewhere that you realize the extent of their multiplicitous identities.

Chaos to Capitalism — a question of bio-power in Greece

As mentioned earlier in this article, Greece has long been encouraging large, multi-child families which is proving nearly impossible in the state's current economic condition. Mary, my tour guide at the new Acropolis Museum, was the only woman I spoke with in Athens who had recently had a baby. She was married and had only given birth a few weeks before the tour. However financial troubles, including a lack of job opportunities for her husband, made it necessary for her to return to work as early as possible, highlighting a struggle to financially accommodate even a single child family. Later, when I asked Cassia and Amara at what age they might consider having children, they both agreed on thirty. After a moment of thought Cassia added to that, stating, "I think that's just a stereotype

though, everyone responds with thirty” reflecting on the fact that neither had a clear idea of when an appropriate time to start a family might be.

When Panourgía spoke of the crisis in Greece, she described it as a type of stalemate, a crisis which is not “progressive” or “becoming” (2014) of anything, and after spending some time there, speaking with my participants and hearing their stories, it was certainly easy to get that impression. There is, however, a clear transition taking place; not amongst the citizens and the state of Greece; but rather the citizens, the European Union, and the global community. Indeed, when speaking with Cassia and her friends, it was only their future in regards to Greece which was hazy and uncertain, any discussion of moving outside of Greece was filled with talks of the future and plans for careers or continuing education. On one of my earlier nights in Athens, I asked Cassia where she planned to eventually move. Cassia replied, “I think Germany, that’s where the love of my life is.” As I was a little surprised by her response, she continued, “Yes, he’s in Frankfurt, or maybe Munich, or Berlin, I’ve been there five times and I’m still looking...” These types of comments became common for Cassia as her ideas of love and relationships were thought of as a dream to be realized somewhere away from home.

The ubiquitous desire to leave Athens points to a paradigm shift rather than a coincidental preference. Biopower, which is traditionally defined as “the numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of population” (Kazanjian 2003:113), could be the cause for such a change. In this case however, I believe any favourable outcomes for Greece, such as having its citizens contribute to the economy from abroad or successfully achieving its ideal family structure through young adults gaining the financial stability elsewhere, as being more incidental rather than its influence over the actions of its citizens. I would argue that this is a larger exercise of biopower by the European Union or the greater global economy, encouraging young Greek adults to explore possibilities outside of Greece. In short, the inability to foresee a future in Athens, and so a refusal to stay within the unstable and inadequate family units of the past, have left these young adults the freedom and even the necessity to seek and adapt to other economies around the world.

Conclusion — and what about Greece?

Relationships among young adults have been greatly affected by the crisis in Greece. Important symbols have changed with metaphors shifting and conflicting with each other, prevalent ideals of ‘Greek blood’ and large families have given way to parents urging their children to hold off on marriage, pursue further education, and find a job in Greece or elsewhere. The precarity experienced by these young adults prevents them from being able to even imagine a future in Athens, let alone a prosperous one for them and their families. The old state of Greece has been broken down and it lies waiting in this liminal state to be re-imagined, while the young adults create new narratives of what it means to be Greek since the crisis, and in the years to come.

Notes

1 Ανώτατη Συνομοσπονδία Πολυτέκνων Ελλάδος

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Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2014. 257 pages.

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This review begins where Heath Cabot's *On the Doorstep of Europe: Asylum and Citizenship in Greece*, ends: among hunger striking migrants in Athens' Syntagma Square. For approximately three weeks at the end of 2014, a few hundred Syrians occupied the square across from the national parliament, appealing to a sense of shared humanity in their demands for rights and acceptable life conditions. This protest was marked by their lucid recognition that the current socio-political and economic situation in Greece offered them nothing but an unpredictable present and future. Significantly, this action shared the form and many of the demands — transnational mobility, protection, well-being — of the hunger strikes and other acts of resistance narrated in the last pages of Cabot's monograph.

As I write this review in early April 2015, the Greek government — now led by the newly elected left-wing political party SYRIZA — is considering its options in regards to its loans from the International Monetary Fund. The country is on the cusp of a potentially transformative moment, one which might have uncertain effects on Greeks and migrants alike. As Cabot aptly intimates, multiple facets of Greece's social, political, legal, and economic landscapes are “moving target[s]” (2014:16). Recent events and ongoing processes, I argue, are not only a testament to the timeliness of her compelling and engaging new book. Rather, they highlight as well the necessity of further research inspired by her lead.

Based on a rich multi-year fieldwork, *On the Doorstep of Europe* is thoroughly engaging and full of fascinating stories, vignettes, and anecdotes. This work draws insights from multiple sites of witnessing and participation, and weaves a number of ethnographic — and I would add poetic — threads that stem from the author's volunteer work with an asylum-related NGO office in Athens. Cabot consequently offers a vivid ethnographic account of the political asylum regime in Greece, crucially exploring the encounters between a variety of actors: asylum seekers; NGO lawyers, advocates, and aid workers; police officers; state adjudicators; and other bureaucrats. She charts how these actors negotiate and re-interpret the political and material constraints, as well as the moral and ethical difficulties, of this legal process — and its attendant ramifications — in a European context. To this end, her attention is also turned to the inseparability of the bureaucracy of the asylum procedure from what she calls “mythopoesis,” the wealth of epistemic practices that strive “to make sense of radical uncertainty, unpredictability, and even absurdity” (2014:9).

The metaphor of *the tragedy* informs the analysis and the organizing structure of the book, which is creatively divided into three “acts”: “Governance,” “Judgment,” and “Citizenship.” In part through its judiciously distributed references to Aeschylus' play *Eumenides*, the book puts forward an evocative analytical device to make sense of what grows out of the encounters between NGO workers, asylum seekers, and other actors. Cabot draws on Butler's analysis of *Antigone* to emphasize some critical elements of the

genre of tragedy: the dangerous threat posed to the normative order of things by the ostracized hero and the transformative moment of the trial. Such instances of judgement — violent, yet potentially creative and cathartic moments that follow from ruptures — stand as core elements of Cabot’s ethnographic work. These are “generative,” she argues, “producing multilayered and dialogical ethical engagements” (2014:106) through which NGO workers and asylum seekers try to find ways to handle the moral-ethical dilemmas they face at various levels: “individual ethics, community politics, and national and supranational governance, contest, and collaboration” (2014:222). Such moments of judgement may emerge from “trouble cases,” which Cabot evokes as forms of disruptions to “law’s normative and regulatory properties: through ‘crises’ in the fabric of law, legal and socio-political orders become open to” (2014:19) re-articulation and reformulation. Importantly, her analysis highlights the concurrent emergence, in these situations, of new openings, thresholds, and transformative possibilities that challenge existing categories and forms. Suitably, then, the third and final act of her book is not one of closings, but of openings. Cabot ends by cultivating an attention to potentialities and shifts-in-the-making that alter the conduct of civic life. In the midst of exclusion and violence, these new forms of inclusion deeply matters for those involved.

In the first act, “Governance,” Cabot considers how governance emerges through the multidirectional entanglements of people, practices, and objects. She presents a thorough examination of the asylum crisis in Greece, noting how it is marked by systemic issues with border management, accusations of inadequate conditions of reception, racist and xenophobic violence, imprisonment and violent policing, and a slow adjudication process that results in backlogged cases and applications in a state of limbo, among others. Cabot resists, however, a facile and over-encompassing analytical finger-pointing at the financial crisis. Instead she highlights other elements at play, including Greece’s geographic location and its marginal positioning in the moral-political landscape of Europe. In her discussion of the charged dilemma NGOs face between investing primarily in advocacy or in immediate legal work, she further points to the double-edged characteristic of critiques, emphasizing how they encourage change while simultaneously reinscribing the country’s political and moral marginalization.

Cabot also importantly focuses on documents as technologies of governance that acquire a life of their own and exert their own social, legal, and political effects. With the goal of accounting for the varied states of limbo in which migrants are thrown, she attempts to track, with difficulty, the seemingly arbitrary delivery and unpredictable movement of pink cards. In theory, she explains, the pink card grants asylum seekers temporary stay in the country and minimal assistance while their application is in process. In practice, however, Cabot demonstrates how different actors seek to strategically interpret and reinterpret its meanings — as well as the limbo it tends to represent — for their own needs, sometimes imbuing the legal document with hope.

“Judgement,” the second act of *On the Doorstep of Europe*, elaborates on moral and ethical questions around recognition, eligibility, and support that emerge from the asylum process and NGO assistance. With sensitive attention to the consequences of decision-making, Cabot emphasizes her interlocutors’ dialogical attempts to comprehend shifting and flexible legal processes and to negotiate eligibility for citizenship and limited non-governmental services. These decisions, she argues, reflect first and foremost “the sociabilities

and sensibilities of NGO encounters” (2014:110). Referring to the law as a theatrical stage, she focuses on Brenneis’ notion of “social aesthetics,” noting how practices of recognition and eligibility determination are influenced by the performances of her participants as both actors and audiences. In other words, cases are co-produced, shaped through the interactions of various participants, and marked by tensions that revolve around issues such as legal literacy, knowledge and epistemologies, legibility, agency, storytelling, and discourses of victimhood. Cabot also highlights the creativity of these engagements which, she states, “may produce a surplus of ethical and affective labor that opens up unpredictable possibilities for reflection, action, and sociality” (2014:74) even as tensions may be left unresolved. Ultimately, she highlights how “law does not simply produce but shapes and (re)configures social realities” (2014:147), noting its instability and elasticity in the face of borderline cases that blur the lines and open gaps to be strategically used.

As mentioned earlier, Cabot’s third act, “Citizenship,” points to sites of new openings and possibilities where notions of city and nation are being reconceptualized and articulated anew. She follows alternative stories — some highly visible, others from the margins of recognisability — that importantly illustrate the formation of new imaginaries and the finding of hope — or something close to it — in difficult circumstances. Highlighting the instability of notions of citizenship and the fallacy of a “monolithic image of Greekness” (2014:175), she dwells on emergent radical possibilities and solidarities that are materializing in this Athens-in-transformation. The author also emphasizes the increasing presence of migrants who are striving for a transparent and accountable asylum process by actually rearticulating “regimes of laws and rights” (2014:199). They have been claiming their status as “citizens of Athens” (2014:197) at a historical moment that is marked by growing civic unrest and claims for political voice in the Greek public sphere.

To conclude, *On the Doorstep of Europe* stands as a strong piece of ethnographic writing. Sprinkled with poetic elements that metaphorically reference Greek tragedy, the book offers an engaging reading experience that may well succeed in inspiring “active emotional and intellectual engagement,” as Cabot (2014:x) modestly hopes. It is bound to become an influential book for scholars working with undocumented migrant populations in Greece, and her resistance to an analytical attachment to the metanarrative of the Greek debt crisis is particularly laudable in this regard. Deeply ethnographic, her insights are also transferrable to other research sites and contexts, for example: asylum process and migration; political violence; NGO ethical and moral dilemmas; technologies of governance; and creative “survival”. I would also suggest that readers interested in ethnographies of law and bureaucracy will find Cabot’s work on the performative encounters and social aesthetics of legal processes insightful. Beyond the content of the book, the student of anthropology may be inspired by the author’s use of the ethnographic form, particular in terms of her methodology and what she has to say about ethnography and fieldwork, as shared through short reflections and passing thoughts. For example, she highlights how life histories, whether collected in the context of determining NGO eligibility or for ethnographic purposes, are always co-produced — implicitly or explicitly — by all of the actors involved (2014:116–117). While *On the Doorstep of Europe* is currently available solely in expensive hardcover and e-book formats, the prompt publication of a paperback edition would valuably facilitate the accessibility of this must-read work to an even greater sphere of scholars.

Descola, Philippe. *The Ecology of Others*. Translated by Geneviève Godbout and Benjamin P. Luley. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press. 2013. 91 pages.

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Many anthropologists are aware that a long-standing controversial debate exists between nature and culture theorists centered on whether or not belief systems about one's environment are attributable to physical or social influences. This debate continues to be fuelled by academics and institutions that position nature and culture as dichotomous terms firmly positioned on opposite ends of the theoretical spectrum. Physical, or natural, scientists often accept a universal definition of *nature*, whereas social scientists have diverse definitions of *culture* and explanations of how cultures interact with nature. As such, the modern understanding of the relationship between nature and humanity tends to be ambiguous, leading to contrasting views of humans as either nature's conqueror or nature's saviour (Ugglå 2010).

In *The Ecology of Others*, French anthropologist Philippe Descola discusses what he has come to call the "anthropology of nature" through his analysis of the traditional dualistic view of nature and culture as distinct phenomena. He insists that the complex relationship between humankind and nature cannot be understood by having such a firm divide between the natural and cultural divisions of anthropology, or the natural and social sciences in general, and that the most important academic question for the present century is how to understand the relationship between culture, or humans, and nature, or non-humans. *The Ecology of Others* is derived from Descola's 2007 lecture for agronomy scientists in Paris who were concerned about being unable to address or understand the social issues their research was uncovering. In 2013, a revised version of this lecture was published by Prickly Paradigm Press (PPP) at the request of Executive Publisher, and American anthropologist, Marshall Sahlins. This was the ideal publishing venue for Descola to express his critical views on the nature versus culture debate as PPP aims to give serious authors free rein to express their views on various academic and world issues (PPP 2010).

In this brief but well-articulated, book Descola summarizes the history of the nature versus culture debate in anthropology and discusses the need for increased academic interconnectedness between natural science and social science. In the latter half of the nineteenth-century natural and social sciences were clearly delineated in theory, methodology, and practice. Descola surmises that this delineation was beneficial for standardizing knowledge and methodology, but did not facilitate a holistic understanding of situations where natural and social science phenomena were combined.

The Clam Debate: materialism versus mentalism

Descola begins, in the first of the book's three main sections, by stating that "a good way to understand the status of a scientific problem is to study controversies" (2013:7). One such controversy in anthropology is the Clam Debate of the 1970s between French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and American anthropologist Marvin Harris. This debate between the two scholars began over a reference to clams mentioned in the Gildersleeve Lecture Lévi-Strauss gave in 1972, at Barnard College in New York. The French anthropologist compared similar details in *Bella Bella* and *Chilcotin* myths from British Columbia to

prove that how societies select and integrate significant aspects of their habitat into their myths stems from universal mental structures — or natural causes. Harris refuted this claim and instead viewed the similarities in the myths as materialistic, the result of adaptive functions for practical utility — or cultural causes.

Anthropological dualism: nature versus culture

In the second section of the book, Descola explains how this debate continues today with many anthropologists still viewing nature and culture as distinct phenomena. Latour (2007) states that it is often believed that culture is the realm of social or cultural anthropology and nature is the realm of physical or biological anthropology. Descola explains that these dualistic views “continue to form the two poles of an epistemological continuum along which everyone endeavouring to better understand the relationships between humans and non-humans must be positioned” (2013:29). At one end of the continuum are natural scientists who study and explain nature in the singular, and at the other end of the continuum are social scientists who study and explain cultures in the plural (Latour 2007).

To each his own nature: dualism or universalism

In the final section, Descola encourages readers to think about why this divide exists in anthropology considering that ethnographers who study the same ethnic groups often produce comparable reports regardless of their theoretical inclinations. Descola then explores if anthropology needs a dualistic or universal definition to explain the relationship between humans (culture) and non-humans (nature). A universal definition seems to be an idealistic suggestion due to the pluralistic character of anthropology and the breadth of what the field studies. It would also fail to account for diverse societal explanations about the natural world and how humans interact in it, which allows a society to articulate how their members uniquely behave and adapt to their environments (Moran 2008). Bennett argues,

[i]f Culture — that is, Man — is seen as the despoiler, the destroyer, Nature is revered as pristine, and the preservationist position emerges. If Man is seen as the measure and master of all things, then the incorporational process is seen as “progress” and Nature is viewed as a “resource.” [1993:8]

Separating nature and culture into distinct fields of study around scientific universalism and cultural relativism does not allow for a holistic and context-specific understanding of the relationship between humans (culture) and non-humans (nature). However, accepting a universal definition of how cultures interact with and adapt to nature is equally prohibitive to understanding how diverse cultures, or societies, interact with diverse environments.

Review: a simplistic overview of a complex debate

Because of its brevity, *The Ecology of Others* provides a simplistic overview of a complex issue and long-standing debate in anthropology. With only 91 pages, Descola fails to elaborate on many of the concepts, history, and ideas that he discusses. He explains in his

foreword that as his original lecture was not written for anthropologists he was unconcerned with discussing such a controversial subject because he knew that the “audience was mainly unaware of the intricacies of the anthropological and philosophical debates about the place of Humankind in Nature” (2013:ii). Unfortunately, the target audience for this book may be aware of these intricacies and a book this brief is unlikely to encourage most readers to definitively make up their minds about the place of humankind in nature, though it may be a thought-provoking catalyst to explore the literature in this area further.

Descola declares that natural science is frequently accepted as the archetype of valid knowledge, but he does not delve deeply into how this belief negates the value of interdisciplinary research which combines research in natural science with social science to address lived experiences and social interactions with nature among diverse cultures. Understanding how cultures identify and form relationships with their natural environments is increasingly important in contemporary times as environments are rapidly being altered by human changes. Kopina and Shoreman-Ouimet (2013) emphasize that many of the environmental issues we deal with today, such as climate change and pollution, have universal impacts, but how diverse cultures perceive, react, and adapt to these issues is not universal. Addressing these universal environmental issues will require collaboration between natural and social scientists to ask how we can, as an international community, holistically address global environmental issues combining widely accepted universal scientific views of nature with the diversity and realities of cultural views. The nature versus culture divide is a controversial debate, but Descola’s proposed mitigation strategy for addressing the problem through a paradigm shift from dualistic to monistic views on nature and culture may be even more controversial among anthropologists today.

Descola explains the nature versus culture debate from both ends of the spectrum in an engaging, narrative tone, and he is correct in stating that the biggest question of the current century will be how to understand the diverse and complex relationships between humans and nature. However, he focuses primarily on the views of historical figures in anthropology and does not focus on insights from contemporary researchers who are currently working on addressing this question from interdisciplinary perspectives. Such an interdisciplinary approach to this question is necessary, considering the world’s pressing and diverse environmental issues and the changing structure of societies. In 1900 only sixteen cities existed in the world; a century later, their number expanded to over five hundred (Moran 2008), and to support these rapidly growing cities humankind has been increasingly expanding into and altering natural spaces and extracting non-renewable natural resources. Globally, as we continue to address issues brought on by human changes, Descola argues that it will “become increasingly difficult to continue to believe that nature is a completely separate domain from social life” (2013:81).

Conclusion

Descola believes that all cultures are culturally conditioned to have some form of differentiation between humans and nature, or non-humans. Since cultural views and understanding of the non-human elements of their environment vary, different forms of knowledge regarding nature emerge. Even within cultures different forms of nature knowledge develop, such as the theoretical divide between science and spiritualists in Western society. Science is not always willing to take into account personal perceptions

and interactions with nature, and spiritualists are not always willing to believe empirical scientific data. Combining these two forms of knowledge could have immense benefit to holistically comprehending natural phenomena and developing a strong global ecological consciousness to combat environmental issues. Anthropology is ideally suited to be the field to spearhead holistic studies incorporating biological, cultural, and social aspects of the relationships between humans and non-humans if it can move past the opposing views on the continuum of “nature naturing” and “nature natured” (Descola 2013:85). However, developing a universal explanation that holistically explains human and nature interactions is not a feasible or relevant approach to moving past this dualistic view. As interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research opportunities continue to be developed, and accepted by, scholars and institutions, Descola’s vision of a new academic worldview, in which the relationships between humans and non-humans are analyzed and explained from diverse perspectives combining nature and culture, may not be as idealistic as it seems.

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