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PLATFORUM

Journal of Graduate Students
in Anthropology

University of Victoria

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UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

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We acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and PlatForum operations take place, as well as the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The 2017-2018 PlatForum editorial team welcomes you to the 16th edition of our publication. PlatForum is the longest running, student-organized Anthropology publication in Canada, and we strive to provide an accessible and open platform to which all anthropology graduate, and in this issue, undergraduate, students may contribute. As we transition to an online-only platform, we notably depart from a tradition of featuring the works of students from a cross-section of Canadian universities and showcase instead the diversity and richness of graduate student research interests from within our department at the University of Victoria. The theme of this edition is 'entanglements' and we asked authors from a range of sub-disciplines and thematic foci to consider the layers of complexity and interconnectivity inherent in anthropological research.

We cast our gaze between the thematic research foci of the University of Victoria's Department of Anthropology, and the research interests of the authors featured in this 2017-2018 edition. The articles, drawings, and personal reflections herein demonstrate some of the many ways in which emerging scholars are encouraging a rethinking of, and a reflexive engagement with, existing forms of knowledge.

Authors in this issue tackle a range of important topics through different lenses and interpretations, demonstrating the creative potential of future academic scholarship. Authors submitted poetry, drawings, articles, and personal reflections on such topics as the circulations of material culture, reproduction and stigma, and academic scholarship itself. Each looks at the many entanglements of human experience.

Bradley Clements reflects on the politics of being, or becoming, entangled in Indigenous governance and disentangling from, or critically rethinking, the position and output of the academic researcher. Anna Heckadon's illustrations help us to visualize

Anthropology in practice, seeing its many processes through a different lens. Luke Kernan and co-author Jorge Angel-Mira explore the relationships between traditional knowledge, biology, spiritual experience and land or occupied environment in Aboriginal Australian "Dreamings." Their work delves into the intricate relationships between humans and land. Similarly, Lisa Rogers traces human-material entanglements embodied in marine shell use for ornamentation over thousands of years, and across vast geographic landscapes. She investigates the complex interactions between people and marine beads across space and time.

Anna Thompson analyzes American court cases to trace the way language becomes entangled in human rights and the differential treatment of immigrant children in U.S. detention centres while Anu Lotay encourages readers to change the narrative of miscarriage and misery, asking us to abandon reductionist assumptions which marginalize diverse experience in favour of complexity in the ways we understand, and hear, women's miscarriage narratives.

This volume brings together research and writings from across the anthropological spectrum, entangling diverse knowledge, insight, and opinion into a complete whole. And as our Department sees the transition of Chair from Dr. Ann B. Stahl to Dr. April Nowell, we would like to dedicate this volume to these two inspirational women and leaders.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Lloyd and the PlatForum Editorial Team

CONTRIBUTORS

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Bradley is a settler of English and Scottish heritage, born and living on unceded Lekwungen territories. Bradley chose to study museum anthropology after working in exhibitions of children's paintings from the Alberni Indian Residential School with the Survivors who created them. Bradley's graduate research considers the representation of the genocidal history of Canada's residential school system in the new History Hall of the Canadian Museum of History, which opened July 1st, 2017. He focuses on the role of repatriation, self-representation and visitor engagement in working against continuing colonialism.

2. ANU LOTAY

Anu is a 2nd year PhD student researching experiences of pregnancy loss among Indo-Canadians in Canada. She also conducts community-based research for the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group.

3. LISA ROGERS

Lisa Rogers is currently a Master's student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria. She completed a Bachelors with Honours in the same department in 2013. Lisa's main area of interest is Paleolithic archaeology, with a particular focus on human-material interactions in the context of ornaments and rock art. She has also been a member of the Grassridge Archaeological and Paleoenvironmental Project excavation team (2015 and 2016) in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.

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Jorge Angel-Mira, MA, is currently Manager-Projects, Porters, and Morgue at Kelowna General Hospital. He completed his MA at the University of British Columbia with a focus on the extractive sector and impact on population health in El Salvador. Jorge is still actively involved in research as the manager for Kelowna Injury Surveillance collaborative funded by the Canadian Public Health Agency.

5. ANNA THOMPSON

Anna finished her BA in Anthropology with Honors from the University of Victoria in 2017. During this time, she became interested in international migration, border studies, and medical anthropology. Her undergraduate Honors project looked at the treatment of children who try to cross into the United States along the US-Mexico border. After graduation she interned at the International Planned Parenthood Federation in Brussels working on projects related to sexual and reproductive health in migrant and refugee communities. She is an incoming Master of International Community Health student at the University of Oslo for fall 2018.

6. ANNA HECKADON

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UNSUBMITTED: REFLECTIONS ON ACADEMIC RESTRAINT

BRADLEY CLEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This is a personal reflection on the choice to not submit a library researched paper about a sacred Mowachaht belonging. I made this choice due to concerns about the spiritual power of the cultural belonging that I had been writing about, and because I did not have the knowledge or relations to know whether I could safely disseminate words about it. Instead of submitting that paper, I submit this reflection on politics of becoming entangled in Indigenous governance. Doing so can entail working to unentangle oneself from certain scholarly traditions to which many anthropologists may feel entitled or obliged.

Thank you to those who have discussed the issues of this article with me, most of whom have been Indigenous student peers or Elders. Kleco kleco especially to Tommy Happynook and Alana Sayers.

INTRODUCTION

I spent much of last summer researching and writing a paper. Thinking that it would make a useful contribution to PlatForum's collection of my peers' work on the theme of entanglement, I revisited and edited it for publication. Then I decided not to submit it. Instead, I offer some reflections on the politics – and poetics – of my choice. In brief, my emerging sense is that anthropology's claimed recognition of the seriousness of Indigenous ontologies and material agency (Blaser 2013:550, 559; Di Giminani 2013:541; Piliavsky 2017:14; Rodman 1992:641; Thom 2017:143) must guide

more than just theory. If anthropology is to be an anti-colonial or decolonizing practice, we as anthropologists and as people must work to (and work out how to) adhere to the Indigenous forms of governance that we are accustomed to simply thinking and speaking about.[1]

The paper that I wrote deals with a Mowachaht cultural and spiritual belonging that was collected from Yuquot, on northwestern Vancouver Island, by George Hunt in the early years of the 20th century.[2] It has been in storage in the American Museum of Natural History in New York ever since. Several anthropologists and Nuu-chah-nulth scholars have published about this belonging over this period (Boas 1930; Brody 1994; Coté 2010; Jonaitis 1999; Mowachaht-Muchahlaht First Nation 2000; Umeek 2011). Indeed, the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation (2000) has given formal permission to study and publish about it, so I did not see my writing as an intrusion. But there was a reason that it was deemed necessary for the band council to discuss this permission at all. Prior to their resolution, questions had been raised by Elders over whether the topic of this belonging should be discussed even by Mowachaht people as a collective, let alone by outsiders, due to the powerful nature of the belonging in question. The ethnographic literature echoes the Elders' concern (Boas 1930:266, 268; Jonaitis 1999:xii-xiii, 9-10). According to the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation (2000:22-23), however, there is now consensus that repatriation is necessary for this belonging, and that scholarship can aid in that aim.

Although I felt that my literature-based research made a relevant argument about the danger of assimilating sacred materials into secular, capitalist, colonial, and institutional frameworks, I was guilty of such assimilation myself by writing a paper about a belonging that Elders have long said should not be discussed openly. While this dilemma highlights tensions which sometimes exist between band councils and community-recognized knowledge keepers, my paper would likely do little to aid the council's intended repatriation work. In short, I have come to question my ability to ethically entangle myself with this topic as someone who has minimal immediate relations with the Mowachaht community.

We all know the catch-phrase of academic life: publish or perish. This quantitative measure of scholarly success motivates accelerating

production of mobilizable (if not mobilized) knowledge. The paradoxical sense that we must publish papers that are unlikely to be widely read may help make poor writing permissible. Having slogged through many theory papers in which the weeds of language outweigh the tuber of insight that they conceal, I suspect that I am not the only scholar who has been tempted to disseminate an idea before learning to effectively communicate it. Who can blame us? Considering the pressures of academic life and the readership of academic articles, it seems that we are directed toward a world where scholars write not to be read, but to plant a flag of discovery upon an idea so that none may intrude without delivering the tribute of citation, the currency of academic status.[3]

Whether or not what I pulled back from submitting was poor writing, it was potentially unethical writing. Not unethical in the eyes of colonial law or tradition, in terms of university ethics policies, nor in the sense that I hurt anyone by researching it.[4] It was potentially unethical in the sense that I knew enough to know that there could be impacts to publicly discussing my topic, but not enough to know what those impacts could be. It might have been all too easy to brush off such concerns. But writing is how we in academic traditions share ideas that we believe to be important and potentially, at least, powerful. Responsibility and honour to our words should not be submitted to neoliberal academic demands.

One response might be that we need common bases of communication as academics: fora to try things out and share unfinished ideas. I agree. Conferences and seminars are great places to converse, try new ideas, and hear feedback. And so is publication, if it is done intentionally and carefully.[5] In some cases, however, there may also be something subtly insidious about the emphasis that we need common bases of communication as *academics*. When a recent guest lecturer described a discrepancy between his data and community accounts, an audience member challenged him on his apparent ontological privileging of a scientific paradigm. His response was that "we" – that is, anthropologists – need to have a common basis of conversation. I agree, but simultaneously question the apparent insistence that we should be able to discuss such discrepancies in the academy even if we do not or (think we) cannot discuss them with those who we unilaterally represent and implicate.

This may be a complex question in many contexts, but its implications in the case of my paper seem clear to me.

It can be hard to put aside or re-think projects, especially when they are apparently near completion and are – on the academy's terms at least – good scholarship. But when I face the difficulty of this decision I think about conversations with Indigenous scholars and community members who navigate the difficulties of what they can and cannot share about their communities, only to be faced with white academics like myself who too often show no such qualms (for more on these implications, see Araluen 2018). Audra Simpson speaks of how and why Indigenous peoples are sometimes compelled to act in "excluding and illiberal ways" (2011:210), such as what she calls "ethnographic refusal," "for the express purpose of protecting the concerns of the community" (2014:105). This is an unfortunate state of affairs, but it should be an understandable one. By feeling at liberty to share what we should not, some anthropologists have created conditions in which interlocutors must self-censor because they cannot trust us to.

So why, beyond whinging, have I submitted *this*? Why not just decide not to submit a paper that needs more work and leave it at that? Partly because I have recently seen similar situations requiring academic restraint arise, leading me to think that this can be a worthwhile conversation to have. But also because I feel that withholding can be as generative, educational, and interesting as sharing, and that both must be done right. That some territory should not be accessible to settler power or presence tells us something about the reality of Indigenous sovereignty. That some belongings and materials have potentially dangerous power and agency that should not be engaged with without the right knowledge and relations tells us something about the reality of Indigenous ontologies. That some knowledge is not intended to be shared broadly tells us something about the nature of that knowledge. Following or contravening these laws have impacts that may be intellectualizable, but that is the tip (not the *point*) of the iceberg. Can Indigenous knowledges and sovereignties be understood, instead, through the embodied, emotional, and intellectual experiences of settler academic restraint, of not intruding, of not sharing? Through action, but also through inaction? Learning which knowledge to share indiscriminately and which not to is part of

trying to abide by Indigenous governance, rather than just theorizing it. Occasionally, submitting to Indigenous governance may mean not submitting to academic journals.

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[1] My focus here is on people similar to myself: white settler students of anthropology. All readers, however, whether of similar background or not, will need to determine for themselves if and how these reflections apply to their work.

[2] The term "belongings" refers to many things which have been called "artifacts" or "objects" in museum discourse, working to centre ongoing Indigenous relations to these materials rather than objectivist and objectifying Eurocentric categorization. George Hunt (1854-1933) was a Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw anthropologist and associate of Franz Boas, founder of North American anthropology.

[3] James C. Scott (2012:105-111) takes the direction of this trend to its logical end in a near-future academic dystopia where the policy of "participatory autocracy" has rationalized faculty governance, "in keeping with the neoliberal emphasis on transparency, full public disclosure, and objectivity…" Charles Menzies (2017) reflects on the colonial and authoritarian bases of the discovery paradigm in academia. Carrie Mott and Daniel Cockayne's (2017:954-955, 961-966) discussion demonstrates the hegemony of uncritical (dis)engagement with sources based on quantitative ratings.

[4] As a library researched paper, all the information that I was articulating had already been made publicly available, either by the community in question or scholars who had engaged with them. My considerations here, however, may raise questions of how to engage with already-available information, as opposed to original field research which has long been the topic of ethical debates.

[5] I hope that the present offering can be such a contribution.

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"I HAD A MISCARRIAGE AND I WAS RELIEVED": ANALYZING ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES OF THE MISCARRIAGE EXPERIENCE

ANU LOTAY

ABSTRACT

Most narratives of miscarriage tend to centre on grief and loss. However, the notion that miscarriage is *only* a tragic event marked by feelings of grief has marginalized other responses that may not conform to this dominant narrative. In this paper, I analyze alternative responses to miscarriage, which subvert the prevailing narrative of grief following miscarriage, by analyzing a selection of five online narratives—four popular online magazine articles and a blog post—on the subject. An examination of these accounts shows how authors use the online space to present alternative experiences that challenge the conventional understanding of miscarriage

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Internet has become an important source for bringing awareness on the subject of miscarriage and reproductive disruption (Murray 2015). For example, in July 2015, Mark Zuckerberg, CEO and creator of Facebook, and his wife Priscilla Chan disclosed their experience of miscarriage in a Facebook post ("Mark Zuckerberg…" 2017), which garnered 1.7 million reactions, as of this writing. This was followed by ordinary Facebook users disclosing their personal stories of miscarriage and fertility issues in the comments on this post.

Like Zuckerberg's post, most narratives of miscarriage tend to centre on feelings of grief, loss, heartache, loneliness and depression (see Bansen and Stevens 1992; Boynton 2015; Robinson 2014). However, the notion that miscarriage is *only* a tragic event marked by feelings of grief has marginalized other responses to miscarriage that may not conform to this prevailing narrative. This is because the idea that a miscarriage may not elicit feelings of grief or may even be desirable is not commonly disclosed. Cultural constructions of miscarriage typically center on women's grief, trauma, and active mourning following the event and, as Reagan (2003) argues, are products of history. However, these simplistic understandings fail to encompass the layered complexity and experience of pregnancy loss.

In this paper, I analyze alternative responses to miscarriage, which challenge the prevailing narrative of grief following miscarriage, by analyzing a selection of five narratives—four popular online magazine articles and a blog post. The internet as a medium allows users to disclose personal narratives due to its accessibility, mutability, and the ability to be anonymous or pseudonymous, and it affords the potential to have one's narrative viewed and shared by a larger audience than would be possible in some other forms of media. I will examine them with reference to the concept of agency and how it operates within these narratives, as the authors use the online space to present narratives which subvert conventional representations of miscarriage as *solely* marked by grief and mourning. Furthermore, an analysis centered on framing these narratives as exercises in agency provides an understanding of how individuals negotiate identity within the context of miscarriage. Based on insights from literature and an analysis of narratives that express non-dominant experiences of miscarriage, I aim to examine how miscarriages are interpreted within these discourses, how they contend with dominant narratives, and how they contribute to a greater understanding of the experiences of miscarriage and reproduction.

MISCARRIAGE

The term "miscarriage" is used to define an early loss of pregnancy that occurs within the first 20 weeks of gestation; pregnancy loss after 20 weeks is known as a stillbirth ("Miscarriage" 2013). An estimated 80% of miscarriages occur in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, "when the embryo is felt by the woman as part of herself" (Layne 2003). Miscarriages can have significant psychological effects on women, their partners, and families (Robinson 2011). Studies describe the experience of miscarriage as resulting in feelings of "loss, grief, sadness, alarm, fear, and guilt" (Abboud and Liamputtong 2003), bereavement (Moulder 1998), betrayal (Borg & Lasker 1989), and helplessness (Gerber-Epstein et al. 2008). An increase in depressive symptoms and anxiety following a miscarriage can also result in major depressive disorder (Neugebauer et al. 1992; Robinson et al. 1994), post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Brier 2004). Feelings of guilt and shame (Asplin et al. 2014) and marginalization, shame-induced stigma, and physiological trauma have also been reported (Robinson 2011; Seftel 2001). Women also report a desire to make sense of their experience of pregnancy loss (Harris and Daniluk 2010) and some women feel the tragedy of the loss for years after the event (Gerber-Epstein et al. 2008). A miscarriage can cause individuals to question whether they will be able to have children in the future and it can lead some women to question their femininity and fertility (Gerber-Epstein et al. 2008).

Miscarriages are often spontaneous and occur without medical or chemical aids, and are therefore not always within the control of biomedical care and surveillance (Hardy and Kukla 2015). In Root and Browner's (2001) study, some women believed that miscarriage was caused by not following pre-natal health guidelines, such as failing to follow doctors' orders or attending prenatal care appointments. Moreover, others in this study attributed the cause of miscarriage to thought rather than action, arguing that "miscarriage is a direct function of the pregnant woman's desire, or lack thereof, to bear a child" (Root and Browner 2001:205). Testing, diagnoses and treatments regulate and order most pregnancies in North America (Hardy and Kukla 2015). A miscarriage that is desirable, then, subverts biomedical and social norms and narratives; it is a rejection of the dominant meanings of miscarriage ascribed to their selves and bodies. Some may also be rejecting predominant discourses of "good motherhood-to-be" which is characterized by deferring to medical

authority, privileging the fetus's needs, and preparing for birth and motherhood (Musial 2014).

Studies show that cultural factors greatly affect reproductive narratives (Dellicour et al. 2013; Haws et al. 2010). An individual's history with previous pregnancy and infertility experiences and their cultural context shapes how they will respond to pregnancy loss. A study of the experience of spontaneous pregnancy loss for infertile women who conceived through assisted reproductive technology found that women experienced a profound sense of loss and grief, which they shared with their partner (Harris and Daniluk 2010). These women also reported feeling a sense of injustice and unfairness of having to contend with infertility and then pregnancy loss. They reported feelings of awkwardness and anxiety about investing in the pregnancy. However, this study also reported that some women felt relieved after a negative pregnancy test because then they would not have to experience the constant uncertainty that would accompany up to 9 months of pregnancy.

Maker and Ogden's (2003) interpretive phenomenological analysis of the miscarriage experiences of 13 women found that, along with grief, particularly during an initial period of "turmoil," some women who did not want a pregnancy had also described feeling relieved. The final stage of their emotional experience of miscarriage, which the authors termed "resolution," was characterized by women's experiences of moving on and a shift in their responses from turmoil, to adjustment, to resolution. They experienced a decline in their negative emotions and, importantly, saw miscarriage as a learning experience, situating it within their biography.

Relief may also be a factor in the experiences of partners or family members. While some studies examine the experiences of male partners and family members, there are few studies that focus on the experience of pregnancy loss from the male perspective. One such study by Murphy (1998) involved unstructured interviews with five men, all of whom experienced miscarriage as sadness and loss, except one participant in the study who "felt nothing but relief." The author explains that this was due to how "real" the baby seemed to the participant and whether or not he had become "mentally engaged with the idea of being a father" (Murphy 1998:330).

In discussing the value of pregnancy from a philosophical perspective, Stoyles (2015) argues that the responses to learning that a woman has experienced a miscarriage tend to assume that the woman will be distraught. This is often reflected in the messages of consolation offered by friends and relatives. Other responses reflect that the woman did not lose a child and that grief is temporary. Furthermore, responses frequently assume that a woman always desires a child or that, if she does not, she must only be relieved:

> …in pro-natalist societies, our social repertoire is found wanting in relation to cases in which a pregnant woman who experiences a miscarriage has no desire to be pregnant either at that specific time or again. When we know or assume that the woman who was pregnant didn't want to be pregnant, there is a tendency to assume that she will feel relief insofar as she has "dodged that bullet" and will now get on with her life. And while she might feel such relief, this is likely to be only one aspect of her experience. (Stoyles 2015:96)

As the author notes, these responses fail to grasp the layered complexity and experience of pregnancy loss and thus fail to adequately respond to it. Stoyles (2015) argues that because the fetus and the pregnant woman are both liminal subjects—as the personhood of the fetus is contested and the pregnant woman can be thought of as a mother and, also, "not yet a mother"—this creates some confusion as to how we should think about pregnancy loss.

Following Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), charting the history of miscarriage discourses helps contextualize the cultural construction of miscarriage and its impact on women's embodied experiences of miscarriage and motherhood. For example, Withycombe (2015) analyzed letters authored by women writing about miscarriage in the 19th century, and finds that a collaboration between women who experienced miscarriages and the doctors who studied the expelled embryos and foetuses was key to the rise of embryology and the scientific knowledge of reproduction in the 19th century. While some women and their families objected to the use of expelled fetal tissue as specimens for scientific study, many did not express moral objections to doctors who wished to study the products of a miscarriage. This, according to Withycombe (2015), is due to how reproduction was understood at that time. Rather than a medicalized

and momentous social event, some women were "exhausted by a married life of never-ending reproduction" (Withycombe 2015:256). Due to restrictions on birth control and safe and legal abortions, women had few, if any, safe choices in preventing pregnancies. Thus, some women were "relieved, or even overjoyed, at the event of miscarriage, and for those who were less than thrilled about being pregnant, seeing the lost pregnancy as a specimen may have been emotionally helpful" (Withycombe 2015:256). Some of the narratives I analyze speak of similar birth control and abortion restrictions and moral dilemmas, along with financial, emotional, and physical burdens, which may have contributed to the sense of relief expressed in these accounts.

Importantly, Withycombe (2015) states that medical discussion and women's narratives on miscarriage at that time did not employ a language of blame or failure, in contrast to how individuals frame contemporary experiences of miscarriages. The author argues that this is due to women's increasing sense of control over their fertility in the modern era which contributes to a feeling of failure, loss and sadness; this, along with the connections between ideal motherhood and womanhood, have helped shaped contemporary experiences and narratives of miscarriage.

In her historical exploration of representations of miscarriage, Reagan (2003) argues that the meaning of miscarriage is historically and culturally constructed. She writes that, at the beginning of the 20th century, miscarriage was believed to be harmful to women. Then a shift in thinking resulted and miscarriage was considered a blessing instead; but, by the end of the century, it was seen as a source of emotional devastation. Reagan (2003) notes that a new social movement is encouraging women to speak about their grief following miscarriage and these narratives are no longer only confined to woman's magazines. Grief is an expectation and pregnancy loss is now associated with the mourning mother.

Early 20th century experiences of miscarriages were marked by fear of illness and death for child-bearing women, and later, blame was ascribed to women for pregnancy loss (Reagan 2003). By mid-century, for women who did not desire a child or the prospect of pregnancy, a miscarriage was considered good luck, especially in light of harmful and illegal abortion practices. During the 1980s,

there was an increase in the coverage of miscarriage, especially on support groups for grief due to pregnancy loss. An obstetric nurse who noticed that people were often dismissive of the experiences of women who miscarried formed one of the earliest of these support groups in 1977 in Illinois. Popular magazines and periodicals painted miscarriage as a personal tragedy and a social movement of white, middle-class women in the US constructed new meanings for miscarriage, equating it with losing a child (Reagan 2003).

This movement is centered on active mourning and rituals such as candlelight ceremonies, biblical ceremonies, and using jewellery, crafts, and other objects to commemorate the child. Thus, the "mourning mother" as a social figure who is engaged in these rituals is a more socially productive and positive representation than the "guilty mother" who may have caused her child's death (Reagan 2003:366). Even institutions such as hospitals now perpetuate an expectation of mourning following pregnancy loss that is projected on all people. These institutionalized messages are also politically charged, driven by feminist and women's health movements for respectful care, but also embedded in thinly disguised political ideologies and belief systems such as Catholicism and anti-abortion movements, which only serve to inhibit open dialogue on the range of feelings, emotions and experiences regarding pregnancy loss.

The formulaic treatment by institutions of care for pregnancy loss, prescriptive mourning rituals and expectations of behaviour constrain and obscure other meanings of miscarriage and experiences of loss, which do not conform to convention. Now, Reagan (2003:363) notes that, "some women still greet their miscarriages as good news; these women and their relief, however, are neither reported by newspapers nor celebrated by hospitals. Such a feeling is one that women are expected to keep to themselves." The following analysis of online narratives that present a wider range of responses, including relief, seeks to expand current understandings of experiences of miscarriage.

ONLINE DISCLOSURE

Foucault (1978) explains that, with the rise of Christianity, care of the self became less about writing, self-reflection, and self-mastery, and instead became a rite requiring people to acknowledge faults and

temptations in order to produce truth about the self. Foucault makes the claim that:

> The confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth. We have since become a singularly confessing society. The confession has spread its effects far and wide…One confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell to anyone else, the things people write books about. (Foucault 1978:59)

It can be argued that self-disclosure of personal, sensitive information in the online environment is a form of confession of which Foucault writes. Kantrowitz-Gordon (2013:876) explains how "the advent of social media…has contributed to the rapid expansion of the confessional society where a confession is available to a potentially enormous audience and the authority figure has been removed as the sole listener." Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, Kantrowitz-Gordon (2013) examined Internet confessions for post-partum depression and found that women used confessionary language (such as "admit," "confess," "share," and "tell") while initially resisting confessing their depression, but that their despair compelled them to disclose their experience. This author reasons that, "Once performed, the confessionary act transformed their distressed thoughts into a reality that could be shared with family, peers, or health professionals" (Kantrowitz-Gordon 2013:876). Moreover, the mothers' needs to confess also helped them overcome the stigma and shame of not meeting the ideals of the "good mother" discourse. Kantrowitz-Gordon (2013) concludes that writing about the pressures of motherhood and depression on the Internet may allow for emotional release and the online environment can provide safe social support for mothers with post-partum depression.

Parr (2008:160) suggests that online social spaces are better conceived of as "intense spaces for transitional selves that are nonetheless providing sustainable geographies of communality for some." These virtual communities provide a space for individuals to feel a sense of belonging by having their emotions and subjective experiences validated by other, often like-minded individuals.

Individuals feel like they are insiders of these discursive communities in contrast to the "outside world," where some users feel excluded. This is because computer-mediated communication can provide some anonymity in comparison to face-to-face communication; this "allows a person to discuss fears, ask factual questions and discuss common experience to reduce isolation," while "[helping] each other cope with shared problems" through writing (McKenna et al. 2002). It is suggested that online social spaces may be even richer and more intimate than offline social worlds as asynchronous communication allows participants to take the time to carefully consider how they want to represent themselves and what aspects they will choose to highlight (Parr 2008; Suler 2004; Walther 1996). So, the online textual medium is particularly useful for "writing the distressed or ill self" and is a promising resource for study (Parr 2008:45).

Hardy and Kukla's (2015) study analyzed some contemporary discussions on miscarriage by women online on forums and blogs. They found that women often seek out online spaces because they feel that the health care system has abandoned them and traditional medical tools are insufficient to help them articulate the experience of miscarriage. Similarly, the narratives I analyze may be seeking to carve out a new space for articulating complex feelings about miscarriage, as the current discourse on miscarriage fails to account for the range of emotions that accompanies the experience. The miscarriage narratives discussed here are an exercise of autobiographical storytelling and they involve, to varying degrees, a presentation of the narrative as a learning experience for both the author and the reader.

METHOD

A Google search for narratives that characterize the experience of miscarriage as positive or a source of relief, using the terms "miscarriage" and "relief" or "positive", yielded several articles in online magazines and blogs, along with thousands of (mostly anonymous/pseudonymous) posts on message boards. Of these, I selected five accounts of the miscarriage experience because they each represent a range of experiences, provide enough information to contextualize the narrative, and are all leading results on Google, which means they have a wider reach than other such accounts. All

of the narratives are in English and four of the five were published in popular online magazines/ newspapers: theGuardian.com, Slate.com, MensHealth.com, and Ravishly.com. The fifth is a blog post from a personal website. All of these accounts are by white, middle-class to upper middle-class authors living in the US and Western Europe.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

Sarah F.

On Ravishly.com, Sarah Fader (2016) writes about her experience with miscarriage describing her pregnancy loss as a "chemical pregnancy," caused by a chromosomal abnormality. Sarah uses the biomedical explanation to explain that this is the most common cause of miscarriages. Her initial reaction in discovering that she was pregnant was that of shock and fear because her previous experiences with childbirth had resulted in severe post-partum depression. After two children, Sarah explains, she was not ready for a third child and describes feeling relieved upon finding out that she miscarried, but also felt that she was unequipped to respond to a friend's pregnancy loss. As Sarah explains, "the only experience I had with miscarriage was the feeling of relief that I had one. What was I supposed to say to a loved one who wanted this pregnancy more than anything in the world?" (Fader 2016). She goes on to say that there needs to be a more "diverse language" to deal with the subject of pregnancy loss because "no two people are the same… Each person processes miscarriage differently." She also promotes a set of pregnancy loss cards sold online which she sent to the aforementioned friend. Sarah communicates feeling shock and fear but also relief, and later, guilt at being unable to respond to pregnancy loss. She also uses the online space to advocate for greater representation of the variety of experiences of pregnancy loss and to promote a product that is intended to create awareness of pregnancy loss. Her experiences of pregnancy loss are shaped by her history of previous pregnancy and post-partum depression and are constituted in relation to the experiences of her friend. In advocating for the diversity of experiences, Sarah accounts for both her experience of relief in relation to other experiences such as the grief experienced by her friend.

Sarah S.

On Slate.com, Sarah Shemkus writes a detailed account of her experience with pregnancy loss called "Losing the Baby: My Week in Gestational Limbo." She starts her narrative by explaining how her miscarriage occurred while she was decorating her Christmas tree. She sets out the piece by explaining that popular accounts of miscarriage on television do not adequately explain what a miscarriage is "actually like." She starts by detailing finding out about the pregnancy via sonogram. Like Sarah F., Sarah S. also explains her miscarriage using biomedical language; "It starts when cell division in the embryo grinds quietly to a halt; the blood and the passing of tissue that we think of as "a miscarriage" are but the final phase." She describes feeling neither pregnant nor "unpregnant," and that the process is long and ambiguous. The experience of miscarriage for Sarah S. was marked by confusion, sadness, and guilt that, she explains, are all documented on baby blogs, except for her feelings of foolishness and relief. Sarah feels foolish and naïve for imagining a future with a child. She also feels guilty because she may not have "grieved enough." When her narrative turns to grief, she acknowledges the taboo nature of feeling this way: "Occasionally, I even feel a bit relieved, though I know I'm not supposed to admit such a thing."

For Sarah S., her relief is due to feeling that she and her partner were not ready for a child either financially or emotionally. However, there is a resignation in this relief as she also writes that, "At least we no longer have to plan an expensive move. At least we'll have less debt by the next pregnancy." She also felt great anxiety at the prospect of pain and bleeding that would accompany passing the fetal tissue. Her descriptions of the bleeding and the care that her husband provides for her are deliberately detailed to compensate for the dramatic but inadequate representations of miscarriage in film and television.

Carrie

Relief is front and center in Carrie's account (Saum 2015) of her miscarriage experience on her personal website. For Carrie, disclosing that her miscarriage was a relief is a liberating experience as she describes that it feels "amazing to admit that…(but) it also feels terrifying." She contrasts her experience with society's opinions

on women's bodies but makes it clear that this is about "[her] family, it's about me." This assertion differs from the previous accounts because it clearly sets out that she is not writing for educational purposes. This account is reflective of the medium of the blog itself, which is usually an intensely personal space. However, Carrie *is* writing for an audience nonetheless (Saum 2015).

She details finding out that she is pregnant and the immediate realization that she did not want to be pregnant. Her vivid descriptions of exhaustion and sharp pains caused by pregnancy symptoms, along with "panic and despair," are ameliorated by the discovery of pregnancy loss. Carrie also discloses that she had had a previous miscarriage. She makes it clear that there was "no joy in the passing, but there was peace. And I wept with relief" (Saum 2015).

Carrie's relief is due to the fact that her son was diagnosed with a severe illness and management of his care is extremely expensive. Her marriage was also affected by the strain of caring for her son. Therefore, she felt relieved because she would not be able to carry or care for another child under these circumstances. Carrie writes that she did not discuss miscarriage with others much because she did not want others to know that she was relieved and that it "seemed wrong to express that," particularly in the context of others experiencing issues with fertility. However, Carrie concludes her account by declaring that

> I give myself permission to feel deep relief without guilt…My relief does not make me selfish. It does not make me heartless. It does not disqualify my precious friends who are struggling profoundly on their fertility journey. It does not mean anything at all. It's just a feeling, and like all feelings, it will pass. Something new will rise up in it's place. One day soon, I'll feel grief for those beings who would be my babies. I'll feel grateful that they chose me to be their mama, even if it was only for a very brief moment in time. Maybe I will still feel the relief of knowing that life did not give me with more than I could bear. Or maybe I will feel all of those things at once. But for now, relief is enough. (Saum 2015)

Carrie's declaration encompasses the aforementioned ideas about the complexity of the miscarriage experience, but it also contains notes

of empowerment and self-advocacy. Her account, like Sarah F.'s, is necessarily relational and she also uses the space to bring attention to the diversity of emotions that are possible following pregnancy loss.

Dan

Dan Slater's (2010) account on MensHealth.com is one of the few narratives of pregnancy loss featuring a male perspective. He starts out by explaining that when he found out his girlfriend was pregnant, she immediately told him that she could not have an abortion. He then discusses how he and his girlfriend met, that they were incompatible, and how his perception of his "biological clock" played a role in his attempts to adjust to the reality of fatherhood despite not feeling ready to take on the role. He also explains that he took on the role as the "serious young man, solid and reliable," "protector," and as a support for his girlfriend. Dan spends much of the piece discussing his sense of self before, during, and after the pregnancy and the subsequent miscarriage. He talks about how his sense of self was split between two people: one who hoped for a miscarriage and another who could not give up his "act as the caring partner." Dan and his girlfriend separated shortly after the miscarriage.

This account presents a broader view of the temporality of the experience of miscarriage and is structured like Maker and Ogden's (2003) stages of turmoil, adjustment and resolution. While the previous accounts focus on the bodily experiences of the women as they experienced miscarriage, Dan's account focuses on his life before, during and after the miscarriage as opposed to the sensations or physical symptoms his girlfriend experienced. While he mentions the spotting that occurs preceding the miscarriage, the focus is on his role as the caring partner who rubs his girlfriend's back, buys her pads, and tries to distract her. In the absence of the physical sensations in the women's accounts, Dan's account is centered on his psychological experience of understanding his life as a man caught between single life and fatherhood. Dan's account, then, focuses on "the motivating factors and interior psychic life of the individual" (Frank 2010). It is also important to note that, unlike the previous accounts, there is no call for changing the discourse on miscarriage. Instead this is biographical story about a man who is unprepared for the responsibilities of fatherhood rather than the experience of

miscarriage. This echoes Murphy's (1998) study that showed how engagement with the idea of fatherhood was directly related to feelings experienced following a miscarriage.

Penelope

Penelope Trunk's (2009) is perhaps one of the earliest accounts of disclosing miscarriage on the Internet. Trunk, who was 42 years old when she wrote this article, had tweeted: "I'm in a board meeting. Having a miscarriage. Thank goodness, because there's a fucked-up three-week hoop-jump to have an abortion in Wisconsin." She explains that she was caught by surprise when this tweet caused an uproar and was later reported by television and news media, and was shocked by their outrage. Echoing the other women's narratives, she writes "I am not sure why people think there is a "correct" emotion for miscarriages. For anything, really. Emotions are complicated" (Trunk 2009). In addition, like most of the other women (except Sarah S.), Penelope is also a mother. She says that she did not want a third child and that she had experienced a miscarriage before which was a source of extreme grief and emotional pain for her. Another reason that she did not want a child is because one of her children has autism, which increases her likelihood of having another child with autism to 90%, and her age indicates that the pregnancy would be a high risk. However, in contrast to the other women, Penelope states that her miscarriage was also a relief because now she would not need to have an abortion, especially in a state where abortion laws are especially prohibitive.

For Penelope then, her account is a way to advocate for increased dialogue on miscarriage but also for abortion rights. She states that her mother is a feminist who congratulated her for her tweet. Because of the attention the tweet received, Penelope explains that she is happy she tweeted it. She concludes her piece by advocating for women's empowerment and agency stating:

> The more women talk about their experiences, the more power they have to shape those experiences. Words such as date rape and antenatal depression are empowering because they give us ways to talk about issues that were hidden when we did not have the language to express

> them. We have a word for miscarriage. We should use it to explore the complicated issues around it. (Trunk 2009)

Like the other women's accounts, Penelope also calls for an expansion of the dialogue around miscarriage, women's experiences, and reproductive rights in general.

Each of these narratives are an exercise of agency in relation to an assemblage of people, discourses, and relationships. As Robb (2010) notes, agency is structured within "a material and social reality" and "it is the socially reproductive quality of action within social relationships." As these accounts show, agency is exercised within material realities and social realities that encompass the authors' relationships with their partners, children and other family members, but also healthcare specialists, the medical establishment, and society at large.

Agency is culturally and historically constructed (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992) and Carrie, Penelope, and Sarah F. all signal the cultural factors or a previous history of lack of dialogue on miscarriage to situate their narrative. Bilge (2010) emphasizes that conceptions of agency need to account for mutually constitutive processes without normalizing or homogenizing categories or assumptions. All of these accounts show the complexity and seemingly contradictory emotions that accompany miscarriage such as grief, relief, pain and happiness without privileging one over another.

CONCLUSION

Narratives of the experience of miscarriage are typically concerned with grief and mourning; they are products of culture and history (Reagan 2003), which constrain and obscure alternative responses to miscarriage that do not conform to this theme. This paper analyzed alternative responses to miscarriage, which subvert or challenge the prevailing narrative of grief following miscarriage. An examination of 5 online narratives of miscarriage shows how authors use the online space to present alternative experiences and responses to miscarriage which subvert conventional representations of miscarriage as *solely* marked by grief and mourning. This paper

highlights that all of these feelings and others are part of the miscarriage experience and that no two experiences are exactly the same, just as no to individuals are exactly the same.

Furthermore, using agency as a framework provides an understanding of how individuals negotiate identity and understand their own miscarriage experiences. These narratives exemplify an agency that centers on personhood, selfhood, and the way that individuality is discursively constructed or emerges within different contexts and at different times (Frank 2010). Based on insights from literature and an analysis of narratives that express non-dominant experiences of miscarriage this paper contributes to a greater understanding of the experiences of miscarriage and reproduction. Future research should continue to expand on the meanings and diversity of miscarriage narratives with particular attention to intersectionality by looking at the experiences of: women of colour, immigrant and refugee women, LGBTTQ* individuals, people with disabilities, and people from low-income brackets, to examine how these contexts and intersecting identities shape responses to miscarriage.

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MARINE SHELL ORNAMENTS IN ATLANTIC EUROPE: STANDARDIZATION OF FORM IN THE GRAVETTIAN

LISA ROGERS

ABSTRACT

Marine shells have been selected for the creation of ornaments – beads and pendants – for thousands of years. Some researchers (Bar-Yosef 2015; Stiner 2014) have suggested that particular shapes and genera of marine shells were preferentially selected for ornament creation during the Upper Paleolithic of Europe. This study examines the shapes of marine shells used for ornaments during the Gravettian period (27,000-20,000 BP) of Atlantic Europe. Results indicate that, similar to previous research, basket-shaped marine shells were being preferentially selected. This result is discussed in the context of social and environmental risk, standardization, and human-material entanglements.

INTRODUCTION

At a global scale, marine shells have been used for the creation of ornaments for tens of thousands of years (d'Errico et al. 2005; Hovers et al. 2003). While these shells are found in archaeological contexts in a wide variety of textures, colours, shapes, and sizes, it has been suggested that modern humans in the Upper Paleolithic (UP) of Europe were preferentially selecting particular species for ornaments (Bar-Yosef 2015; Stiner 2014). In the Mediterranean Basin, for instance, this preferential selection of materials is suggested to relate to the size and shape of the shells, with basket-shaped species becoming dominant over time (Stiner 2014). Stiner (2014) suggests that this shift towards a more standardized form may suggest that a common visual communication system was emerging

in the European UP. While Stiner (2014) focuses on assemblages in the Mediterranean, the present study adds to this by examining the shape of marine shell species selected for the creation of ornaments in the Atlantic zone of Europe during the Gravettian period (27,000-20,000 BP).

The purpose of this study is threefold: first, I will explore whether particular genera of marine shells were selected more commonly for the creation of ornaments in Atlantic Europe during the Gravettian. Following from this I will determine whether, similar to Stiner's (2014) study in the Mediterranean Basin, these shells are standard in their shape. Finally, I will discuss what this information can tell us about social interaction, human-material interaction, and communication during the Gravettian.

In order to address these questions this paper will first briefly explore the material culture, climate, and environment of the Gravettian period. I then discuss UP ornaments, with a particular focus on those made from marine shells. This is followed by a discussion of group mobility as it relates to the transferability of materials and how risk is mediated by social interactions. I then detail the methods by which I collected and analyzed my data and present the results of my study. The paper concludes with a discussion of the results in the context of risk, social interaction, and the preferential selection of materials.

WHAT WAS THE GRAVETTIAN?

The Gravettian period immediately followed the Aurignacian in Western Europe, and lasted from approximately 27,000-20,000 BP. Gravettian populations occupied an extensive geographic range, from the Iberian Peninsula and Atlantic coast, across to the Eastern plains of Russia (Bicho et al. 2017). Assemblages from this time period are characterized most notably by the presence of stemmed, symmetrical, and backed points (i.e. Font Robert, *fléchette*, and Gravette points, respectively), an elaboration of burin technology, and backed micropoints (Djindjian 2000). Other aspects of material culture and social life from this time include the creation of ornaments and rock art, and the deliberate burial of the dead (Pettitt 2011).

GRAVETTIAN CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

This study focuses on the Atlantic coast of Europe, including modern day Portugal, Spain, and France. Much like the preceding Aurignacian period, the climate of the Gravettian oscillated quite rapidly until ultimately entering the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM) (Djindjian 2000). More specifically, southwestern France and northern Spain experienced a generally cool and humid climate between 29,000-27,000 BP, which then began to improve, encouraging the spread of woodlands, between 27,000-24,000 BP (Rigaud 2000). From this point, stable but harsh conditions prevailed between 24,000-20,000 BP, leading to a decrease in woodlands and an increase in fauna such as reindeer and arctic fox (Rigaud 2000). An increase in humidity and woodlands took place for another thousand years, until the extreme cold of the LGM set in (Rigaud 2000). Contrary to the pattern seen in southwestern France and northern Spain, the global cooling trend seen during this period did not seem to have an effect on the fauna and flora of Portugal (Zilhão 2000). Instead, the climate in this area remained relatively stable.

PALEOLITHIC ORNAMENTS

Paleolithic ornaments are items of bodily adornment such as beads and pendants made from a variety of materials, including bone, shell, stone, and eggshell (Moro Abadía and Nowell 2015). Marine shells in particular have been selected for the manufacture of ornaments for tens of thousands of years. For instance, perforated *Nassarius kraussianus* shells from Blombos Cave in South Africa are argued to be among the earliest definitive evidence of symbolic expression in *Homo sapiens* (d'Errico et al. 2005:3). Dating to approximately 75,000 BP (d'Errico et al. 2005), this discovery helped dispel the previous assumptions (e.g., Conard and Bolus 2003; Mellars 1996; Mithen 1996) that the use of ornaments started some 40,000 years ago with the widespread movement of modern humans into Europe.

MARINE MOLLUSKS

The 16 genera of marine mollusks included in this study come from three major groups – gastropods (10), scaphopods (2), and bivalves (4). The scaphopods in this study are smooth and elongated, or tusk-shaped. Bivalves (clams, oysters, mussels, and scallops) are composed of two similar or equally sized shells held together at a

hinge. Gastropods are marine snails, which have a variety of shell shapes (see table 1.1). Basket-shaped marine gastropods are considered to be the most common species used for the creation of ornaments in the Paleolithic (Bar-Yosef 2015; Stiner 2014). Others included in this study are conical (or limpets), star-shaped (similar to basket-shaped but with star-like protrusions), and tubular (or elongated and highly spiraled).

Shell Shape	Marine Gastropod Genera
Basket	*Hinia, Littorina, Nassarius, Neritinia, Nucella, Theodoxus, Trivia*
Conical	*Sipho*
Star	*Aporrhais*
Tubular	*Turritella*

Table 1: Marine shell genera by shape.

GROUP MOBILITY AND THE TRANSFERABILITY OF MATERIALS

In Paleolithic archaeology the transfer of raw materials is often used as a proxy for investigating the degree to which different groups interacted with one another (see Blades 1999, 2003; Féblot-Augustins 1993, 2009; Whallon 1989). By gaining a better understanding of how these networks functioned, we can begin to understand their role in social processes and group survival (Féblot-Augustins 2009). The movement of human populations (and the scale of these movements) is proposed to be largely influenced by the location and quantity of resources on the landscape (Féblot-Augustins 1993, 2009). Studying where materials at a particular site were sourced allows us to determine the approximate extent of that group's mobility. Such studies have shown that during the UP, groups in Western Europe may have travelled up to 200-300 km to procure raw materials (Féblot-Augustins 2009). This distance differs quite dramatically from the Middle Paleolithic, in which group mobility is estimated to have not exceeded 100 km (Féblot-Augustins 2009). The procurement of raw materials from such a great distance may be indicative of expanding social networks during the UP.

RISK, SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, AND STANDARDIZATION

Social and environmental risks would have been a daily reality for Gravettian populations, as they lived during a time of rapid climatic variability, eventually culminating in the LGM (Rigaud 2000). Resource availability would likely have been equally unpredictable. Gravettian populations, however, seem to have thrived during these harsh conditions, as evidenced by the elaboration of their artistic traditions and other social expressions. The need to spread and manage the risks they faced may have led to an expansion in long-distance social networks. It has been noted in ethnographic studies that populations with at least some social connections outside of their immediate area are better protected against risk (Borck et al. 2015; Gamble 1999; Wobst 1974, 1977). Therefore, Gravettian populations may have mediated their risk through the maintenance of social relationships with other groups. The trade and exchange of easily transferable materials would have facilitated these complex social connections, entangling the social and the material. Drawing from ethnographic accounts, reciprocal exchange and delayed reciprocity are used to maintain these connections and to acquire goods in times of resource scarcity (Cashden 1985; Wiessner 1982).

Durable and easily transferable items like ornaments would have moved across these interactions quite easily (Álvarez-Fernández 2002; Stiner 2014). Through a materialist perspective ornaments are active material agents in the construction and maintenance of social relationships (Straffon 2016). These artifacts would have been entangled with those who created, viewed, wore, exchanged, or possessed them. Importantly, this widespread process of exchange allows for social information to pass from one group to another through individual and group interactions. As such, a relatively standardized and highly portable medium such as ornaments could have facilitated a wider dispersal of information (Stiner 2014). While it is ultimately unlikely that we will ever know just what, if any, information was being exchanged alongside these ornaments, we are able to hypothesize the social relationships, interactions, and processes within which they were embedded. Investigations into these social processes, rather than a focus on meaning, have the potential to reveal more about UP populations and their responses to stress or risk.

DATA COLLECTION

The first step in my data collection was to review previously known sites in Europe dating to the Gravettian period. I used the Radiocarbon Palaeolithic Europe Database (see Vermeersch 2017) to export an excel spreadsheet of all sites listed as having a Gravettian cultural affiliation. I then removed duplicate entries, narrowing the results from 2,345 entries to a total of 513. Following from this, I removed any sites with a longitude over 6°, as this would eliminate sites too far from the Atlantic coast. This resulted in a list of 162 sites that date to the Gravettian period.

The next step was to eliminate any sites that fell outside of my area of study. As previously discussed, ethnographic evidence and studies of raw material procurement during the Paleolithic suggest that the mobility range of hunter-gatherer groups typically does not exceed 300 km. Therefore, I deleted any sites that were 300 km or more from the Atlantic coast. To do this I first created an Excel spreadsheet listing the 162 sites and their coordinates. I then imported this spreadsheet into the open access software Gephi, so that I could convert the file to a .kmz format. Once converted, I was able to import the file into GoogleEarth Pro, which plotted the location of each site.

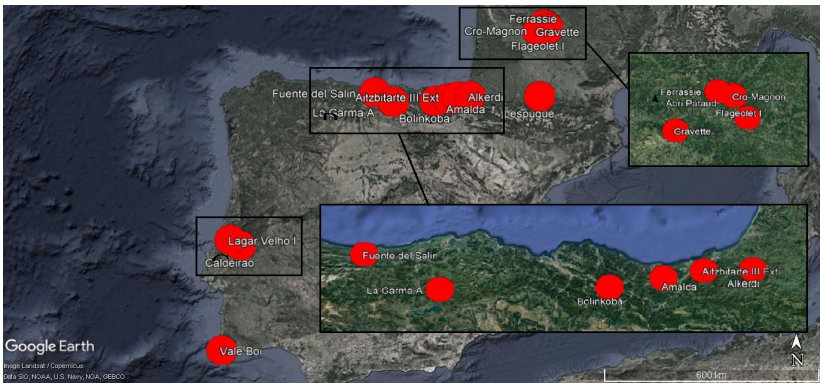

Figure 1: Locations of sites and three regional clusters (A: Dordogne, B: north coast of Spain, C: west coast of Portugal.

From this point I needed to consider the sea level during the Gravettian. Global sea levels during marine isotope stage (MIS) 3

were generally lower than today, exposing large areas of the coastal sea floor (Frigola et al. 2012). From 30,000-21,000 BP it is estimated that sea levels fluctuated between approximately 60-80 m below current levels, after which they dropped dramatically to as much as 130 m during the LGM (Gracia et al. 2008; Frigola et al. 2012). To determine where the exposed sea floor would have been in my study area, I used the European Marine Observation and Data Network's free online bathymetry software (http://www.emodnet-bathymetry.eu/data-products), which maps sea floor depths. I determined that the sea floor was likely exposed approximately 40-50 km along the coast of France, no more than 5-10 km off the northern coast of Spain and Portugal, and 20-30 km off the coast of Portugal.

To determine which sites to include from France I set the scale legend in GoogleEarth Pro to a maximum distance of 250 km (300 km maximum distance minus 50 km to account for the exposed sea floor) and used this to determine a rough geographic boundary. This procedure was used for the northern coast of Spain and Portugal (scale legend set to 290 km), and the coast of Portugal (scale legend set to 270 km). As a result, 35 sites were eliminated from the study.

The final step was to determine whether any of the remaining 127 sites are known to have marine shell ornaments dating to the Gravettian, and if so, what the species or genus of these shells are. To do this I engaged in an extensive search of various library databases to find any mention of marine shells. In total, this search resulted in 112 sites being eliminated for either not being reported to have marine shell ornaments, or due to a lack of information about them. Unfortunately, many sites that are known to have marine shell ornaments were excluded due to the specific species or genera not being reported. In total, this study analyzes 15 sites in Spain, Portugal, and France (see figure 1 for sites and regional clusters).

DATA ANALYSIS

In a study of Üçağizli Cave 1, Klissoura Cave 1, and Riparo Mochi, Stiner (2014) had access to highly detailed data regarding the precise numbers and dimensions of each species of shell used to create ornaments. As such, Stiner (2014) was able to engage in a detailed statistical analysis. Unfortunately, due to the lack of detail in the data

available for this study, it was not possible to conduct a similarly thorough statistical analysis of the marine shell species used. Therefore, my analysis will focus on the amount of species and genera used at each site and in each region, rather than on the amount of each species and genera found.

The analysis conducted was twofold: first, I analyzed the data for all sites included in the study, and second, I analyzed the data for three regional clusters of sites. The regional clusters are the Dordogne region of France, the northern coast of Spain to the west of the Pyrenees, and the central west coast of Portugal. While the latter only includes two sites, and is thus not a statistically significant sample, I proceeded with analyzing it out of interest.

Essentially, the analysis conducted for this study examines the relative percentages of basket-shaped shells found at all sites, as well as in the three regional clusters. For the total sample, I first calculated the total number of marine shell species found at all sites. I then determined how many of the species present at each site fall under the category of basket-shaped. Once this was done, I calculated the total number of basket-shaped shells used across all sites. This was compared with the total number of species present. This methodology was then used to analyze each of the three regional clusters.

RESULTS

Of the data collected for this study, 19 species of marine shells were identified, in addition to four only identified at the genus level. When examined at the genus level, 16 are represented. In total, four of the 16 genera are bivalves, while 12 are gastropods (or sea snails). Seven of the 12 gastropods are basket-shaped, three are tusk-shaped or elongated, one is conical, and one is star-shaped. When considering the complete dataset, there is a total of 23 marine shell species (or genera) across all of the sites. Of these, 14, or 60.9%, of all species represented at the 15 sites are basket-shaped. In addition to this, there are 54 total incidences of marine shell species or genera reported at these sites. In total, 38, or 70.4% of these occurrences of marine shell are basket-shaped. This analysis suggests that, overall, basket-shaped species of marine shells were selected for the manufacture of ornaments more often or were more widely available.

Region	Total Species/Genera	Total Basket-Shaped	Percent of Total
Dordogne	12	6	50%
North Spain	12	9	75%
West Portugal	6	3	50%
All Sites	23	14	60.9%

Table 2: Summary of analysis.

A total of five sites included in this study are found in the Dordogne region of France (Abri Pataud, Cro-Magnon, Ferrassie, Flageolet I, and Gravette). Basket-shaped shells are reported from all of these sites, with two (Ferrassie and Flageolet I) having only this shape of shell in their samples. In total, there are 12 species or genera of marine shell present, and 6, or 50%, are basket-shaped. While this result indicates that basket-shaped beads were not necessarily dominant in this region, it is important to note that 2 of the 5 sites (Ferrassie and Flageolet I) are using only basket-shaped species.

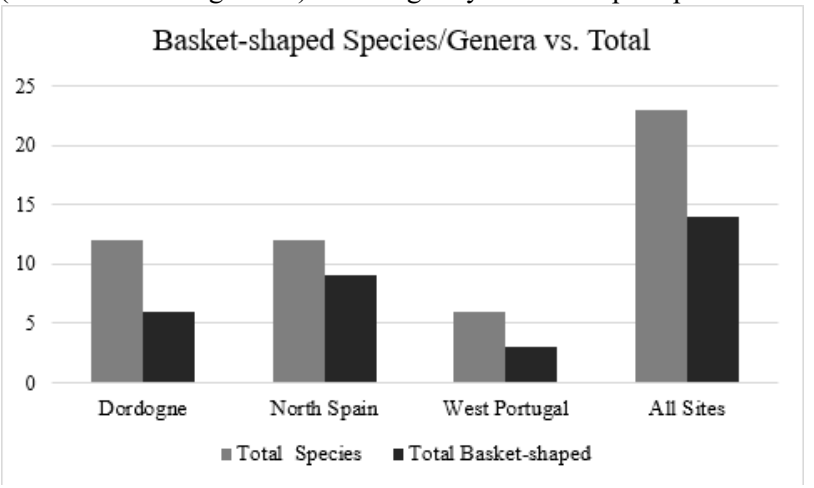

Figure 2: Summary of analysis.

Aitzbitarte III, Alkerdi, Amalda, Bolinkoba, Fuente del Salín, and La Garma A are all located on the northern coast of Spain, west of the Pyrenees. The majority of marine shell species or genera selected for the creation of ornaments in this region are basket-shaped. Of the six sites, five of the shell assemblages are 100% represented by basket-shaped species. In total, there are 12 species or genera of marine

shell, and 9, or 75%, are basket-shaped. This result suggests that basket-shaped beads were being preferentially selected by Gravettian populations in this region for the creation of ornaments.

The two sites in close proximity to one another on the central west cost of Portugal are Caldeirao and Lagar Velho. There are 6 marine shell species or genera represented at these two sites, with a total of 3, or 50%, being basket-shaped species. Similar to the Dordogne region, this result indicates that basket-shaped beads were not necessarily dominant in this region. However, at one of the sites (Caldeiro) only basket-shaped species are present. The results for all regions and the total sample are summarized in Table 2 and Figure 1.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The general fluctuations and rapid deterioration of the environment during the Gravettian would have necessitated the development of strategies to manage risk. Long distance exchange and interaction between groups in different regions would have been an important strategy for risk management. Such exchange did take place during the Gravettian period, demonstrated through the recovery of shell ornaments from far Eastern Europe where populations had no immediate access to the sea or fossil outcrops (Taborin 2000). A common visual communication system would have facilitated this long-distance exchange and interaction (Stiner 2014). The standardization of ornament shape and size could have led to the development of a complex system of visual communication, as these small units could be easily transferred and recombined in a variety of ways to promote meaning (Stiner 2014).

Overall, this study supports the argument that basket-shaped marine shells were preferentially selected for the creation of ornaments. Of the 23 genera included in this sample, the majority (60.9%) are basket-shaped. Along the Northern coast of Spain this pattern is even more evident, with 75% of the sample being basket-shaped. This result indicates that Gravettian populations in the Atlantic zone of Europe, and Spain in particular, were preferentially selecting basket-shaped shells for the creation of ornaments. This may be indicative of a standardization in bead form similar to that noted in the Mediterranean Basin (Stiner 2014) and suggests that a common visual communication system may have been emerging at this time.

The somewhat inconclusive result from the Dordogne region (50% basket-shaped) analysis may actually be a reflection of extensive social entanglements. This region is situated approximately 300-350 km from the Mediterranean coast, which falls just on outside the limit of the range of UP mobility noted by Fébolet-Augustins (2009). This may mean that Gravettian populations in this region were either seasonally travelling to the Mediterranean coast where shells were gathered or were part of a larger network of social and material entanglements linked to their region. As such, they would have had access to a much more diverse range of marine shells, resulting in more diverse genera being used for the creation of ornaments.

The standardization of shell beads is particularly interesting when considering the selection of other materials for the creation of ornaments. It appears that when shells were not available for the creation of ornaments, other materials were used in their place. For instance, in some places red deer canines and shaped stone, ivory, and bone were used to mimic basket-shapes (Conneller 2011, Stiner 2014). At Pair-non-Pair in France, for example, a piece of ivory carved to mimic a cowrie shell was found dating to the Gravettian period (Taborin 2000). The substitution of other materials in place of marine shells seems to have its roots earlier in the Paleolithic. Pieces of ivory carved into a basket shape have been found at many sites dating to the Aurignacian, particularly in areas of Germany without immediate access to the sea (Conneller 2011). Additionally, it is believed that the use of red deer canines may be indicative of an effort to conform to the relatively standardized basket-shape of the predominant marine shell species used (Conneller 2011; Stiner 2014).

The basket-shaped *Nassarius* shell has been referred to by some as the preferred shell of the Paleolithic (Bar-Yosef 2015). However, this does not appear to be the case with regards to the sites examined here. Of the 23 species of marine shell represented in this sample, only three (or 13%) are of the *Nassarius* genus. Species from the *Nassarius* genus would have been readily available to Gravettian populations, as they are quite common in Atlantic waters off the coast of Europe (Galindo et al. 2016). The most common species represented in this sample are of the *Littorina* genus, of which there are six. These two genera are remarkably similar in appearance,

however, and are both basket-shaped. Perhaps, then, it is best to discuss the marine shells in terms of their shape, size, and coloration rather than genus – after all, Gravettian populations would not have classified them by the standardized typologies we have developed for analytical purposes.

In some cases, it is difficult to come to a satisfactory conclusion when considering the data available for this study. In the Dordogne region of France, for instance, it was found that basket-shaped beads represent 50% of the selected materials for the creation of ornaments. It may be the case, however, that the non-basket shaped shells are very low in number, while the *Littorina* or *Nassarius* shells are more numerous, or vice-versa. Without further information as to the actual bead counts, the true extent of the dominance of basket-shaped shells used for the creation of ornaments in the Gravettian will remain unclear.

Future research may involve the application of a similar methodological approach to assess the preceding and subsequent time periods in the same regions in order to see if there are any marked changes in the selection of marine shells for the creation of ornaments. As previously discussed, a similar study was conducted on Mediterranean sites (Stiner 2014), that revealed distinct patterns in the material choices being made. By identifying and analyzing sites in Atlantic Europe with similarly long occupation histories, one could address the question of whether material choices become more standardized over time in this region, as they do in the records at Üçağizli Cave I, Klissoura Cave I, and Riparo Mochi. Considering the state of the available data, however, for such a study to occur one would need to access the collections in order to determine species, count, measure, and analyze them.

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SOMATIC SHOCKINGS ACROSS AILMENT NARRATIVES: LESSONS FROM THE SACRED GEOGRAPHIES OF AN INDIGENOUS SPIRIT-WORLD

LUKE KERNAN AND JORGE ANGEL-MIRA

ABSTRACT

Aboriginal Australian stories captivate listeners and express a unique worldview—each narrative manifests the applied wisdom of traditional understandings of illness embedded within local land and biology in confronting ailment *Dreamings*. These experiences warn adherents about how cultural illnesses infect the living land as they translate and signify through currencies of human suffering. This paper will explore how these ailment *Dreamings* can be further situated within cross-cultural dialogues, to responsibly temper understandings between anthropological theory and community-lead observances by implementing a combination of preliminary fieldwork data, auto-ethnographic reflection, and sources from the Wadeye region (NT, Australia).

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AN INTRODUCTION: THE *DREAMTIME* OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA

The Wadeye region in the Northern Territory is inhabited today by a diverse and resilient Aboriginal Australian demographic and it is one of the largest indigenous townships in the country. Recent estimates have cited a population of 2111, about 91 per cent of whom are Aboriginal (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011a). The town lies ecologically within the limits of the coastal mangroves between Darwin and the Kimberley[1] and it is only accessible by road during the dry seasons. It is a central hub for many of the outstations, both near and far, within the township. The infrastructure of this key locality offers services such as food, transportation, medical, as well as governmental, administrative and recreational outlets to the local inhabitants. The area has a rich history of *Dreaming* story-work—that is to say, the extractive (colonial) practice to later revitalization efforts of fieldworkers, anthropologists, and linguists collecting traditional narratives in the field—traced back to long-standing community traditions, W. E. H. Stanner's fieldwork (1979), and the local Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum. Ailment narratives—which themselves are a type of localized, land-based story wherein illness strikes and becomes a central component to its narration—have been selectively documented throughout each as a facet of bush-life and culture. They reveal ecological knowledge relating the regions and sites that they describe. Holdaway and Allen confirm this in tandem with the dissemination of knowledge of stories by arguing that the issue of Aboriginal knowledge transfer—how it might theoretically work—between and within a land-centered spirituality and one's practical experience of the world as interconnecting and relatable domains in the purchase of wisdom and ecological adaptability (2012: 81).

The Northern Territory has a strong Aboriginal Australian presence—26.8 per cent of the population identifies as Aboriginal (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011b). Revisiting older stories of the *Dreaming*—a traditional cosmology based in Aboriginal Australian thought that speaks then and now of "a sacred, heroic time long ago when man and nature came to be as they are" (Stanner 1979:23)—provides a cultural connection to the land by clarifying people's association to it through their clan repertories. The *Dreaming* is a mythic charter, a worldview, a creation story, wherein

these stories, according to Malinowski, symbolically define the *present* in terms of how each cultural territory practices its ritual, on-site (creative) connection with the land as a sacred geography (1922). This focus on ailment narratives is then a natural extension of that worldview and spiritual-physical ecology. So, being based in Australia, these materials and formations of identity through narrative are indicative of how communities explore their inter-meshed capacity to generate their ecological awareness of themselves on the land.

One of my greatest surprises working with the archival database of *Dreaming* stories at the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum in the Northern Territory of Wadeye was to learn that these accounts included encounters with illness. And that, these components of storytelling themselves were not only motifs, but vital aspects of local cultural representation and belief. Their details—the visceral, artistic, and verbal presentation of how illness strikes within one's country—became much more salient, arresting even, as human suffering surfaces character-by-character. Each account gives a space for reflection, to become auto-ethnographically immersed and perhaps incorporated and subsumed into the land's storytelling, Aboriginal Australian culture, and the *Dreamtime*. I wanted to know how ailments were related to *Dreaming* sites and the stories that used them as part of their pedagogy and stitch-work in a fabric of collective reality[2] (see Simeon 1980; McKnight 1981, 1982, and 2005; Reid 1983; Martin 2008; Schwarz 2010). The literature that I had surveyed on the North American continent was not as rich in either clueing me into these phenomena or giving field reports of ailment narratives—that is, cultural accounts of how illness becomes intermeshed within *Dreaming* sites and shifts one's mobility and experience within these setting was not clear. Stories too are guarded and hard to come by as recorded texts—at least in a more exhaustive and formalized sense of a comparative canon and type. After that jolt wore off, I noticed, slowly, the clever design within the *Dreamtime* as what some anthropologists would identify as a cosmological totality that becomes creatively re-iterated by these case-specific assemblages (Mauss 2001:45-49; Tonkinson 1991:19; Ingold and Hallam 2007). As such, I tease out possible analytics for seeing how illness and its narration might be used to create reflexivity and an awareness of *a* reality. Ailments, from this collaborative framework, can be powerful tools of enculturation. These (tentative and ongoing)

interpretive lines can thereafter be discussed and verified by Aboriginal Australian interlocutors in developing an accountable praxis.

The approach in this ethnographic and creative article leans initially towards threading an interpretivist paradigm[3] that moves toward the possibility of external, emic validation from which cultural translation and community-based research takes place. Sustaining a community of practice around both indigenous and non-indigenous encounters with ailment *Dreamings* can suss out the lived richness of how meaning is constructed through illness and one's relation to the present living land. I endeavour to link with contemporary (neuro-phenomenological) theory and practice in socio-cultural anthropology, when dealing with initial interpretive workings of the source texts and field experiences. These insights are then not so much definitive-s, but rather placeholders in larger intercultural debates. This article describes my story-tracking efforts during my narrative fieldwork in Wadeye as an illustration of how living mythology, or *mythogenesis*[4], operates, effectively validating the inclusion of symbolic interfaces in daily life and its ongoing struggles: humanity's search for meaning (Leenhardt 1979; Young 1983; Van Heekeren; Slotkin 2000). The underlying research question that fuels this literary and social analysis centers on the desire to know how both Aboriginal Australian and (outsider) fieldworker ailment narratives as living mythologies can at once illicit a need for, construct, and perform a fixed reality. I want to analytically follow how the concept of ailment narratives travels in these contexts by disseminating traditional knowledge and establishing a compositional framework for a reality, or a worldview, that assembles as ubiquitous and total[5] through these connections. Or even alternatively uncover how these interpretive lines can be problematic, disruptive.

I will briefly delve into existing ethnographic literature on ailment narratives and my own scholarly practice of creative and fieldwork methods to further situate this paper. Then, the first substantive section of the article will establish ailment narratives as pedagogical tools in Aboriginal Australian culture, emphasizing linguist Lys Ford's 2008 recording of an elder's Muwun 'Sore' story from the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum as a key example. The second will take Berndt and Berndt's Gunwinggu 'Cough' story from their

anthology, *The Speaking Land* (1994), in showing how this tool encodes and transmits insights about disease and cosmology, scrutinizing the manifest content of ailment narratives. Then I will bring both of these aspects together in exploring how ailment narratives might work as a living mythology by focusing on my auto-ethnographic 'Midge' story to illustrate how an embodied-subjective self internalizes reality during these break moments—when sickness as a socio-physiological disruption shifts one away from a naïve adherence of their surroundings and self-in-world relationality. I would too contend that ailment narratives shock self-awareness into human beings through these moments of lived suffering and alter their perception of a solidified existence, re-negotiating the parameters and peripheries of their worldview.

LITERATURE REVIEW, A BRIEF HISTORY OF MYTH AND ILLNESS

The *Dreaming* or the *Dreamtime* describe basic conceptions of Aboriginal Australian belief; the term as it indicates is practiced, at times, via dreams and dreaming to connect communities with their ancestors and traditional lands—it has to do with telling a story about the "ongoing creation of the world and all that it contains" and how that reality translates and perpetuates into modern life (Morton 2005: 197). The stories of the *Dreamings* highlight an indigenous worldview, one concerning ancestral spirit beings and the formation of geological sites (see Hume 2004 for an etymology and overview of the *Dreaming* and its complex history as an 'imperfect' neologism). The *Dreaming* narrates a sacred, heroic time when both nature and humanity became created and practiced as they are—yet, it is beyond what Westerners think of as time and history, as it is and was an *everywhen*, an all-encompassing phenomenon (Stanner 1979). Tonkinson writes that these *Dreamings* are aboriginal cosmologies, which not only account for and present an origin of land, spiritual beings, and the vitality of life but constitute it as a totality of these bonds maintained through one's embodiment and ritual in the daily order of life (1991:19).

These conceptions of the *Dreaming* speak of coming to terms with a living narrative, a world system at play, which should be foremost understood as the *Law*—in relation to how each *Dreaming* directs behaviour, relatedness, and enduring protocols for constituting life

within people's lands and family estates. Above all, the *Law*[6] is said to take precedence in one's daily (ongoing) experience, wherein each *Dreaming*, through series of shared stories, instils a specific set of laws and rituals to be practiced by regional Aboriginal Australian clans. These communities then formulate their ideas through symbols that translate into a living mythology that works its way into the patterns of life through myth and transforms the sets of practices that dictate personal and communal behaviour (Malinowski 1954:100). Myths can then be thought of as an element of narrative, a story, which comes to define, perhaps in part, the worldview of a people—guiding material and felt images that center meaning within the facts of life and instill an awareness of human capability and purpose in the universe (Murray 1968:355-356).

Myths work within images that are poetic and sensory; elders teach valuable lessons to future generations about how the world works through creative devices and, as such, the traditions of myth transmit the patterns of enculturation that underpin society, that of *the Dreamings* and *the Law* (Morphy 2005). These configurations of ailment narratives describe the ongoing relationship that Aboriginal Australians have with the natural world as well as their fears and anxieties that are attached to native conceptualizations of illness and disease from successive accounts of sickness on the Australian continent (Devanesen and Maher 2003, 2008; McKnight 1981, 1982). Myths of human suffering themselves are tools for understanding the complex configuration of health—and are of great interest to healers, physicians, and researchers with the goal of understanding lived experience and benefiting from the resulting empathy and self-reflexivity attached to persevering through pain.

Medical anthropologists of all theoretical schools are also concerned with both the causes and effects of human sickness. Illness and its relation with disease has been conceptualised in medical anthropology in various paradigmatic ways. Initially, illness, the subjective experience, was understood as separate from disease, the biological signs. However, within the interpretative theoretical framework of medical anthropology, illness and disease are themselves not mutually exclusive and therefore cannot be understood outside their cultural context. Illness is culturally constructed in how it is perceived, experienced, and treated; it is based on subjective explanations from specific cultural frameworks

and the meanings attributed to lived events within these systems. Disease, on the other hand, has been regarded by Singer and Baer as the biological objective signs of sickness (2007:65). Neither illness nor disease should be regarded as singular, disconnected entities. Both concepts are explanatory models arising from complex interrelated social and cultural frames of meaning (Kleinman 1978:252). Therefore, ailment narratives experienced by indigenous peoples of Wadeye and the Northern Territory become internalized through lived suffering, manifest into the spiritual-physical plane of reality, and ultimately alter the worldview of those who partake in the experience. As an explanatory model within medical anthropology, these ailment *Dreamings* are physically embodied as illness and conceptually formulated as disease (Singer and Baer 2007:86).

Within the interpretive theoretical orientation, there is a more fluid view of phenomena—letting emerge the perspective of psychosomatic[7] experiences. Illness as the subjective experience is present in both the mind and body as socio-cultural beliefs are learnt and shared between people. Gathering places are, furthermore, ritual sites where these beliefs are transferred and ingrained in the mindset(s) of those who gather to participate in the collective corroboree of sharing what is known about the observable world. Joint ecological wisdom is translated into story and myth to illustrate how disruptive moments of one's symptomology and senses can lead the body and mind to express illness and disease in individuals within these ailment narratives, or even anyone who might disregard their warnings therein by transgressing the Creative *Lawtime*.[8]

A consensus on disease can be difficult, even among professionals. According to Baer (1997), interpretive medical anthropology has documented various biomedical physicians reaching different conclusions about the same clinical condition. These interpretations of the cause of the disease can only be understood within the socio-cultural context of the sufferer. For this reason, cultural beliefs and symbols are relevant to understanding "how meaning and interpretive practices interact with social, psychological, and physiological processes to produce distinctive forms of illness and illness trajectories" (Good 1994:54).

The interpretative theoretical orientation suggests that disease is only knowable by sufferers and healers through a distinctive set of interpretative activities. These activities involve an interaction of biology, social practices, and culturally constituted frames of meaning (Kleinman, 1978:252). It is vital to acknowledge that the role of healers is to offer a meaningful explanation for illness and respond to individual, familial, and community-based issues surrounding illness—something that biomedical practitioners often tend to forego in the treatment of disease for profit and advancement. As this paper progresses, it will shed light on the lived manifestation of ailment *Dreamings* within the Wadeye region and the North. These narratives and local *Dreamings* become sound evidence for how the symbols of living mythologies manifest into the phenomenology of daily life as they internalize psychosomatic illnesses and diseases. If healers and doctors alike fail to distinguish and deal with the cultural domain of both illness and disease, they will likely have difficulty appropriately managing the disease and perhaps place their charge in peril for being ill equipped to provide an effective treatment.

A QUICK FORAY INTO (AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC) METHODS AND FIELDWORK

I was initially drawn to the Wadeye region for its distinct Aboriginal Australian population, its history of ethnographic research dating back to W. E. H. Stanner in 1932, and its research-archival infrastructure through the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum. All of these indicate socio-cultural resilience—traditional bush life and its belief systems of the North persisted and permutated to meet the demands of modern life, re-ascribing the patterns of living mythology. I began my ethnographic endeavour in furthering literary anthropology, ethno-poetry, and story revitalization by documenting how local cultural poetics permeated into expressions of daily life through the power of myth (see Robinson 1966; Rothenberg 1985). I began to see connections as I immersed myself in the phenomenology and experience of the land—eating up the details as I wrote my notes and field poetry, letting it seep in and alter my lived perception and being. I asked myself, “How can the visceral, animate streams of sensory detail and cultural poetics within the Wadeye region be channeled for story revitalization?” I wanted to know how myth operated as a living force in directing expressions of culture.

Wadeye's dry season provided a more accessible time and environment to conduct my preliminary fieldwork for four months in 2013, July to September, recording and documenting stories from elders and traditional owners with the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum and Mark Crocombe, its Cultural Coordinator. I tried my best to make myself a valued, dedicated asset to the community by volunteering my time and skills to the museum, the language centre, the school's literature and media production centre, and one of the regional authorities, Thamarrurr Regional Aboriginal Advisory Council (TRAAC). I was able to gain initial trust within the community as I worked alongside well-established community members. I conducted qualitative ethnographic research—placing myself within the participant-observant paradigm and journaling whatever seemed relevant to the field or topic.[9] The aim of this research was to clarify how people connected with *Dreaming* sites and stories, to remember and (re)create the oral histories that make this region rich. We joined Wadeye and Daly River clan members as they accessed lands and told stories to one another at these sites. Mark Crocombe and I had an extensive network of documented story locations as well through the work of Roland Robinson and other fieldworkers, and we planned to visit these sites to document how locals were reconstructing near-lost stories by tapping into the cultural poetics, sensory details, and geography of the area to reconstruct old stories—or tell new ones.

This article benefits from my fieldwork in the Northern Territory of Australia—helping me explore aspects of the ailment narrative experience. I am also not aware of many other publications that deal with illness and ailment narratives (as a type) in terms of its potential to disrupt and shock—certainly they are documented as texts that describe sickness all across the continent, but I am interested in further developing the creative bridgework into how the living, conscious agent of culture, the Aboriginal Australian, might internally process suffering. I am interested in primary experience and how the subjective-embodied self is transformed through the break moment(s), or rather the shock of suffering an ailment. I intend to contextualize, interpret, and theorize aspects of these narratives from the field and the Northern Territory with respect to myth and mythopoeic thought and critical medical anthropology. I want to use personal experiences of illness[10] to gain an in-depth picture of how

ailments affect the development and surety of reality by shocking its totality into the forefront of the human mind.

SICKNESS WANDERS THROUGH LIVING DREAMS: THE PSYCHOSOMATIC CYCLE OF COSMOLOGY

The Tutelage of Suffering

The elders, or clever men (*kirrmarn*[11]), employ ailment narratives to instruct younger generations in the deep philosophical concepts and the phenomenology of the land handed down to them from their travels and descent, as well as from the original story-bearers, the Ancestor Beings of the *Dreamtime*. This system of belief in Wadeye and the North is a metaphysical construct that moves from its set continuity to the present in directing/assigning the world with values and destinies when orchestrating both social categorization and socialization/enculturation processes. The world setting and its stage is (re)cast according to these ideologies of the *Law*, the longstanding sequences of living mythology that course through embodied-subjective selves to coalesce and re-interpret the present moment of life and its artefacts. The stories and their associated ailment *Dreamings* instruct people within a particular worldview (one that is linked to Aboriginal Australian patterns of socialization and/or the event of trauma), but these narratives also begin to re-ascribe—even transform—people from a mundane/profane status to that of the sacred/taboo through restricted knowledge (Morphy 2005). The ideal time for this measure of tutelage is during one's upbringing and initiation into adulthood and eldership: the initiation rituals are similar to those conducted in the 1950s when they were first being documented by anthropologists (Stanner 1959, 1960a-b, 1961a-b, 1963, and 1979; Ivory 2009:129). These secret ceremonies have themselves included ritual scarification along with the lessons of pain, suffering, and difficulty to effectively encode the collective memory of the clan into the flesh and consciousness of the initiate. These events act in accordance with the directives of *mimesis*, *metonymy*, and *mnemonics*; that is, the symbolic framework of suffering experienced and taught through these stories (re)creates an inner microcosm of the *Dreamtime* through a likeness, substitution, and memory of the cultural relations that animate the moment and the scar.

Elders maintain strict control over narratives in Wadeye and the North given that they denote ownership, rights, and clan affiliation. The education of others becomes realized in instances where stories as cultural frameworks and interpretive rubrics become intelligible—where the embodied-subjective self translates lived struggle into purpose. These ailment narratives compress and encrypt the abstract in testing people's awareness and connection with sacred geographies of the region; a multiplicity of meanings, embedded knowledge, is encoded into them so that their condensed abstract forms only become highly productive to those who have been culturally granted the cypher and its secret knowledge and sorcery (Morphy 2005:162-163; McKnight 2005:207-211). This secrecy is necessary. A spirit or an assassin will make short work of knowledge for ill effect on an unsuspecting victim by bending the *Law* within their *Dreaming* country: the presence of a *dillybag* with the right essence can cause all kinds of havoc from boils, sores, sicknesses that will not fade, to outright death (Reid 1983:41-44). Moreover, both sickness and suffering as storied events can make the world less abstract and more productive by revealing the codes present in the ailment *Dreamings* that render a greater understanding of the *Law* and provide practical knowledge about that area's sacred geography. These interludes shock both empathy and perceptiveness by taking the embodied-subjective self out of reality to experience *communitas* with death, or rather confront decay, when shot in the thick of sickness (Turner 1974). The re-entry into wellbeing, I have intuited from the literature and my own story-work, strengthens the whole of reality as a totality and humanity's socio-biological need for its continuance, and grants an individual the self-reflexive gift of contemplating his or her existence outside of its clutches as a non-entity, only held together by the sensation of agony. The lived perspective granted from an ailment narrative and the traumatic event of illness thus, according to Laughlin and Throop, unlocks the hidden aspects of reality and renders its subsequent parts truer in light of this revelation (2001:711).

The psychosomatic cycle of cosmology as a theory is an adaptation of Laughlin and Throop's eidetic cosmological model (2001:722). They propose that stories and events as symbolic expressions have the power to change cosmic structures by (re)negotiating a lived reality that conforms to a totality and is myth-bound. I further these claims by examining how ailment narratives as a genre of myth

become entrenched within the North's ethos through recognized socio-cultural frameworks and the psychosomatization of illness. This highly generative and interpretative theory finds its caveat for how meaning is sowed from one domain to the next and completes the cycle of meaning; namely, that the lived experience of illness and suffering shocks the embodied-subjective self into accepting the definition and limitations of reality. This key mechanism illustrates why suffering is an exquisite teacher and engenders swift change. Traumatic memory bonds itself onto consciousness. Floyd Lirrwi's 'Sore' *Dreaming* story in the Marri Tjevin language of the Wadeye region, recorded by Lys Ford, shows how powerful ailment narratives, as a tool of enculturation, are entrusted with safeguarding the *neurognosis*[12] of the *Law* into perpetuity. Here is the public and recorded version of this story from the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala museum that I retrieved in 2013:

> This "Sore" 'Dreaming' belongs to brothers, Dumu, Wirirma and Manhdharrangu. The name of the place where he lives is really Natji. "Sore" 'Dreaming' used to live over there at Wudi Sjirridi. That Black Cockatoo lives at Wudi Sjirridi now, he chased "Sore" away from there. 'Hey!' Black Cockatoo said to him. In the old days, men used to go there. Two of my fathers used to camp there. "Sore" said to Black Cockatoo: 'We can't live together here.' 'This belongs to me now, it's my country!' Black Cockatoo told him. 'Get going! Clear off!' Black Cockatoo told him. Alright, "Sore" moved away. 'Ah! The creek!' said "Sore." The creek totem kept running high. "Sore" 'Dreaming' kept walking to the creek. This "Sore" 'Dreaming' kept walking to it. Alright, the rain kept pouring down. Manhdharrangu, my relation, kept walking but it was useless. He was covered with sores. He's here at the creek. He sat down and washed the blood off him. 'Ah! Sickness is weighing me down!' he said. 'I'll sit down at this 'Dreaming.'' He saw a good place. He stood up and then looked back at this creek. "Sore" said: 'It's finished, sickness is weighing me down now. I'll lie down here now.' He camped at Natji. This 'Dreaming,' "Sore" 'Dreaming' is still living there—at one with the land itself. My fathers, Dumu and Manhdharrangu didn't go near him then. 'Ah!' my father told them both. 'Don't go over there, in case you get it. In case sore grabs you and never stops. I alone of the three brothers can feel him on your behalf. 'I'll make sweat for

> you to protect you. It will go away without me doing anything.' But I wasn't born then, and I can go to the "Sore" 'Dreaming' completely safe. The thing lives at Natji. That's the whole story.
> (Story retrieved in 2013, originally recorded by Lys Ford on the 8th August 2008)

The 'Sore' *Dreaming* recounts the mythic, troubled journey of Manhdharrangu in creating a songline from Wudi Sjirridi to Natji, settling at a creek site. The sores become a manifestation of sickness and later a bodily scar that demarcates the microcosm of the *Dreaming* site. The wound acts as a living text, one that becomes slowly imbued into existence by his all-too-human suffering, which forms an associative complex that re-iterates the symbolic precepts of the *Law*. This stitch-work triggers Manhdharrangu's being as his sore-induced trauma activates his deep assemblages of culture. He remembers at that moment, his essence unites with the sacred geography of Natji—he lives there. The *mimesis* (the likeness of that expression to become, or the living performance of suffering), *metonymy* (the substitution, or stand-in, for how that ailment becomes a scar), and *mnemonics* (the memory of how that event transforms the sufferer) all work to connect Manhdharrangu with the microcosm in bringing him closer to the 'Sore' *Dreaming* at the creek. The shock of illness caused by thick and bloody sores (the physical manifestation of the effects of these aliment narratives) enables him to accept his fate and reality as an Ancestor Being, to join the land once again. The Natji ailment narrative stands as a powerful tool in teaching how land and biology interact in rendering the spiritual borders of territories[13]. Each opens in accordance to the sacred geographies and psychoscapes of the region—defining the ecological borders of the real and the tabooed. Further depth, ritual, and ceremony is added as well to the site over time in re-enacting the drama of illness.

Illumination—Illness and Insight Manifest as One

These experiences of "the sacred" encoded as ailment narratives and *Dreamings* across Aboriginal Australia express deep philosophical concepts (Malinowski 1954:100; Young 1983:14; Tonkinson 1991:19). These narratives work as symbols and relations[14] in unison with humanity's cognitive architecture—and these texts-as-simulations tap into the access points of enculturation in rendering

insight into the world from the dense cosmological framework of the *Dreamtime* (see Marett 2000, 2005 on the integral process of ancestral illumination/inspiration and the accumulation of spiritual power). These patterns of thought become internalized from lived interactions into the *neurognosis*, etching lessons of the living land and illness as one flow of traditional wisdom; the sensory details of cultural poetics become animate, heightened—more generative, perceptible, and totalizing—at this given juncture in animating the present living mythology. The symbolic mapping of place via myth and ailment narratives is so powerful that the environment becomes radicalized, remythologized: the land itself no longer resembles an outsider's empirical, one-to-one experience of space and place (Langon 2005). Place does not simply exist as place, but rather as *a belonging* and *a psychoscape* upon which all the activities and the identities of *the Dreamtime* play out in perpetuity. By recognizing this interchange and heeding the warnings of their elders, Aboriginal Australians are able to render a wealth of knowledge about their surroundings (the vast system of local resources too) and their own selves in navigating sites and ailment *Dreamings* through dedicated, timeless lore alone. This connection provides a necessary wherewithal and corresponding map to navigate the socio-geographic identity of the North and its topical environments; each story connects story-bearers and initiates with the moral universe, further elucidating existing knowledge of the region compressed as cyphers inside known narratives within the greater cannon and ritual-complex of the *Dreaming* during ceremonies. And, although respecting the *Law* within each country and its territorial estate[15] may often come with ease, instances of illness only ever illustrate the mounting need to obey the wishes of the Ancestor Beings according to the inherent, indivisible logic by which they shaped and now guard Australia as a sanctuary and living entity[16]. Each traumatic event of suffering brings forth the world picture of the *Dreaming* story to explicate the phenomenon at present and soothe the pain-bearer with a semblance of peace and a call to purpose—to manifest myth as a mode of consciousness.

The thick, red dust of reality settles with its layers of manifest, socio-cultural content imbuing its cosmological structures as each telling of a story fills in what is perceptible and true in marking the character and depth of Aboriginal Australian life. The perplexity and paradigm here is that illness only makes sense in terms of a given cultural

framework (Kleinman 1978; Good 1994). As each mind interacts with the *Law* and physics differently, the experience of living myth and its resulting phenomenology vary in agreement with that interaction and its limitations. Reality becomes performed through these assembled totalities as they manifest the singularity of consciousness in terms of an allowable physics (Laughlin and Throop 2001:727-728)[17]. In short, cultural frameworks and their contents that are programmed into the neural network of an embodied-subjective self, influence—even co-create through *poesis*[18]—definition and causation in the world and ultimately, the lived experience filtered and directed by one's worldview. Illumination locks in psychosomatic illness. Enculturation and ailment narratives co-create phenomena, manifest from the interactivity between environment, one's consciousness, and the quantum sea, that produce perceptible shifts or changes in reality and, subsequently, shock its acceptance *as such* upon the event horizon of suffering. This specificity gives immense power to traditional sorcerers and healers, *kirrmarn*, as they understand the context of culture and likely the cure for illness and its unique socio-cultural manifestations. The literature often notes their control over their *Dreamings* with the power to cause and cure illness linked to their authority as story-bearers and lore-keepers (McKnight 2005:208-209). Direct knowledge of sickness and its cause, whether social or biological, is imperative in providing a feasible course of action as well as a positive prognosis; illumination and insight come with a connection of embodied-subjective self to sacred geography and its power to shift reality.

Nawararang's 'Cough' *Dreaming*, as recorded by the Berndts from Western Arnhem Land in the Gunwinggu language, recounts the songline from 'Bottle Rock' to Mangaral-rindji (Berndt and Berndt 1994:61-62). The ailment narrative focuses on Manada, his sons (the Waranoidjagu), and his brothers. Their journey is perilous, and the son's death-transformations populate the land with 'Cough' *Dreaming* sites. The singing of the Waranoidjagu cycle at Mangaranggi possibly marks a ritual-complex and a large multi-clan initiation ceremony by the elders and song-men. These enculturation events immerse Aboriginal Australians into the lived totality of *Dreamtime* cosmology. These ritual activities create exchanges of *energy* that bind initiates and *kirrmarn* to the quantum sea and power, the currency of *the Dreamtime*, wherein internalized stories

and art manipulate bio-states (Hume 2002:77-84). No doubt, the storied, poetic, and ritual narrations of Maung, Udjurulg, and Mandibin at initiation solidify the feverous conviction of the potency of ailment *Dreamings* as the Waranoidjagu become sick, and later become agents of that sickness and of contagious magic as facets of the living, speaking land. The result of tutelage, and later illumination, is an increased knowledge of sacred geography and how this unique etiology of disease becomes connected to the land at these sites; all of this direct wisdom traces back to a deep understanding of the science of bush-craft and life. This knowledge and its poetic re-telling became itself dangerous as illumination/insight manifests illness in the people of Mangaranggi, and that illness resulted in a change in reality, that is, their acceptance of the *Law* in becoming hills and jungle trees in returning to the *Dreamtime* and instructive wards to trespassers[19].

The Songlines of Sickness, Sweating Reality into Existence

The intensity, magic, and mysticism of ailment narratives and *Dreamings* occurs with the subjective, phenomenological experience of suffering; and, in order to get a deeper register of that experience, I have had to explore my own consciousness as a theoretical model for how illness itself affects the cycling of culture and self-awareness. Part of this paradigm has been laid out by Laughlin and Throop (2001). My adaptation creatively utilizes the socio-cultural context of illness and its poetic narration to provide stronger, grounded mechanisms to describe and further the functionality and processes at work in rendering myth into a single reality, a word into a world. I propose that my fieldwork experiences are adequate in giving a glimpse into this phenomenon, and that this socio-cultural bridgework through auto-ethnography and field poetry will be generative in flushing out appropriate cross-cultural theories of illness. Figure 1 is a brief diagrammatic representation of how ailment narratives as stories (re)work cosmology according to the present living mythology and experiences of the embodied-subjective self. The continuity of the *Dreamtime*, or the *everywhen*, is maintained within this negative-feedback loop; the participation in culture results in real-life experiences being interpreted via a set cosmology, and thus this practice instantiates the cosmology in lived experiences to ratify the truth of people's systematic knowledge and worldview (Ricoeur 1962, 1968). Positive feedback is possible as the

direct experience of experts and clever men, *kirrmarn*, create alterations and permutations within the ritual-mythopoetic construct of the *Dreamtime*.

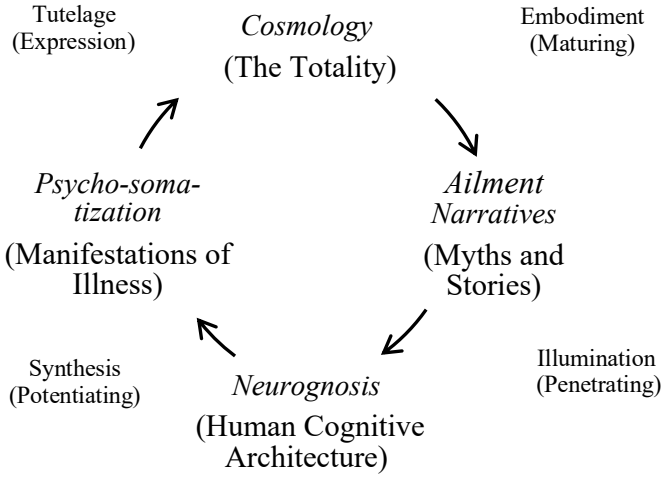

Figure 1: The Psychosomatic Cycle of Cosmology. A culture's cosmology, or total phenomenon of consciousness, is embedded in the narrative framework that gives rise to individual experiences and worldview formations. Stories and mythopoeic acts express a given cosmology as they tacitly penetrate the human cognitive architecture with insights and directives that illuminate the renderings and polyglossic simulations of consciousness. Neurognosis and deep thought, positive ruminations, develop the symbolic content and relations within ailment narratives by influencing the mind-body connection upon the event horizon of illness and subsequently reinforcing manifestations of illness with socio-cultural dimensions to a disease's biological specificity, namely its etiology and prognosis. Through the course of a lifetime and the ongoing traumatic shock of suffering, the psyche and its constellation of neurognostic structures appropriate to the culture and environment as the embodied-subjective self internalizes the worldview formulation that provides it with self-reflexivity and self-awareness in understanding reality *as such.*

The receptivity of these cosmological systems—albeit conservative in orientation—should not be forgotten as the primary world-metaphor used to describe it is that of "life" and "living," and the power of these systems to grow and adapt as living beings with the settings and circumstances of modernity shows great resilience and efforts of cultural revitalization in sustaining one of humanity's

oldest belief systems and worldviews (Bowler et al. 2003; Tonkinson 1991). One can only assume that ailment narratives as a facet of socio-biological life have been a common—if not primary—driver in the formation of culture and the acceptance of a world-system, a reality *as such*, for as long as the phenomenology of illness has been at play in shocking, challenging the embodied-subjective self to have a spiritual reckoning with the indelible fact of its own existence.

One of my most intense ailment narratives from the field was my experience with midges, or sandflies, in the dry warmth of July. I was invited on a boating expedition by Mark Crocombe to Mairmull Creek to visit Cowboy's encampment, one of the elder's sites. I was not aware then that we would be passing sandfly *Dreaming* country (McCauley 2008:25). The little devils must have caught me for traversing along Sandfly Creek to Docherty Island without proper protection or *kirrmarn* to ward them off. Contact with the site was enough for the contagious magic to work its potency on my flesh:

> The warm crashing winds of Wadeye's sea-destined waters fell upon me, unaware of these invading angels as torrents of winged sandflies enveloped my sun-burnt skin. The enchanting mystery of the boat being hurled across the creek's surface like a seamless spear stabbing its mark. The silent prick and ravenous feeding, painless upon impact—a perfect crime, or punishment divine. Their butchery flawless. The sickness within my skin waiting to erupt. Night falls fast. The blight-blemishes awoke in waves across my skin fired with fever. The livid itch—oh, that itch—sending wicked screams through my nerves. That itch, that itch, that itch, *that* itch… What horrors haunted my restless 3-am turning, torment split into bloody fires and the searing cry of the land speaking to me. The insomnia breaking me and the borders of reality. A moment's respite in the sharp scraping of raw rosy scabies, pouring a yellowish puss. The trunks of my legs appeared as trees bleeding exquisite sap, living resin, streaming from every open pore. I wept for relief inside, perplexed and riddled with agony fired at the bottom of my spirit. I crashed, exhausted in the sadistic rapture of post-midnight suffering, sorrow-swept by a single conviction. Defeated then—death, its caustic spirit, my friend did wander through my living dreams. I bitterly clung to thoughts of a lover distant, without embrace,

> until the storm of sickness past, and each night I was re-born into the soothing warmth of reality—more self-aware of my own need for its nurturing presence as I sweat it back into focus, fo(*u*)nd grounding.
> (Field poetry composition from fieldnotes, July 21st of 2013) [20]

Both indigenous and non-indigenous sympathized with my affliction[21], and it is something that locals have become accustomed to in habituating within the tropical, Australian coastal regions. The body shock from the bites, sweltering inflammation, and bleeding amid the fever was enough to result in a noticeable change in my phenomenological experience of Wadeye. The 'Midge' ailment narrative as my own lived suffering created an imprint on my consciousness, a microcosm of the physical-psychological wounding event. The interplay between *mimesis*, *metonymy*, and *mnemonics* has effectively fused the lived trauma upon my psyche, so that every blemish visible on my flesh triggers a deep memory of the sandflies and their spurring of my own acceptance of reality by single-handedly breaking the feverish grip of insomnia—and finding rest. In fact, the increased empathy and sensitivity from my own suffering heightened my receptivity to sensory detail and the poetics of the land. A greater dialogue became present. Ailment narratives, myths, creativity, imagination—and dreams as well—are powerful tools in connecting one to the *Dreamtime* as a living cosmos, giving it birth, shape, and expression in the ethnomethodologically everyday and motions of life (Pentony 1961; Price-Williams and Gaines 1994). Dream and story cycles are ways of managing ongoing relationships with the symbolic orders of one's worldview.

Indeed, and most gratefully, I garnered a greater acceptance for how both indigenous and non-indigenous people might form and establish connections to their existing geographies, one's deeply symbolic and otherwise—especially the indwelling potential and liminality for synergy and syncretism to happen, explode even, in our grating ruptures of understanding, a bridging and blending between co-present worldviews. Granted, there is a vast difference between what one might deem as my 'ecstatic' field experiences and a fuller reckoning with Aboriginal ailment *Dreaming* practices—but perhaps not one that can be easily stricken as incommensurable to a more sustained inter-cultural exchange. The way I felt, became malleable

through sickness and stress, presented a budding affinity, an opening, and eagerness to absorb wisdom—to think differently about what I was experiencing through the teachings of indigenous and clan-based schemas for how one might rectify these living myths within me and others. I have so much to learn, that is clear. Years to sit and listen to how the Aboriginal inhabitants might guide me in these thoughts—to understand and intuit how they might feel, know their lands, beyond an interpretation. My fieldwork exposed me to a growing ecological consciousness within me and from my biological interactions with the living land of Australia—in the midges that bit me, the water I drank, and the bush tucker that I consumed as a guest to the Wadeye region. I had one surety, throughout, that I was happy to be present in existence and grateful for having recovered, reality-embracing and self-reflexive in that one act. Ailment narratives or *Dreamings*, I would propose, are primal forces not to be lightly reckoned with as they spur a stark acknowledgement of death, or its possibility beyond the impossible, and so, in reverse, affirm reality and existence. I can only fathom to continue this preliminary line of research, to see in what way Aboriginal philosophies can corroborate these claims, twist them, or fill in the messy blanks—offer insight to this ongoing inter-cultural dialogue of how only the living can face death. And that sometimes confrontations with death and suffering are necessary if we are ever to truly accept that we are real, embodied. If anything, anthropology confirms how we live with courage, achingly so.

CONCLUSION

This 'ever-in-progress' article presents a (largely outsider) set of anthropological and auto-ethnographic interpretations of *Dreaming* ailment narratives which I collected in Wadeye and encountered throughout Aboriginal Australian literatures from the Northern Territory. I have thus implemented a cultural and neuro-phenomenological reading only—and only so much as—to initiate further discussion points with community members. The goal has always been to develop and hone my own inter-cultural insights here, so that I might become more prepared to engage and speak with local Wadeye and surrounding residents about their ailment narrative traditions within a subsequent research period. This article does not, in fact, try to render a 'definitive' or 'axiomatic' account about anyone's ethnographic reality. The breadth of my first fieldwork visit was not capable of addressing this concern. Yet, I would encourage

more interdisciplinary, collaborative work on this topic in the near future [22] . John Mansfield, a socio-linguist, has done recent ethnographic research in Wadeye on Metal Mobs (2013), and in personal correspondences, we have talked about ailment narratives and sorcery in the township. Mansfield confirms that there are clear connections between ailments and cosmology in Wadeye and the North: "People interpret a lot of illnesses as being caused by black magic—others can be caused by totemic transgressions, but I hear that mentioned far less often. And people who have rights to certain totems have special abilities to cure related maladies" (personal communication, November 25, 2013). All the facets of life within Wadeye are coalescing to re-ground reality and of the consequences of illness within an inter-cultural and equally modern mosaic of thought. Also, as everything develops, and globalization increases in the area, generating an influx of non-indigenous people working in the township and the Northern Territory, there is definitely an important tangent to explore with how local Aboriginal inhabitants have been for some time incorporating and carefully tuning those practices into their assessment of ailment *Dreamings* (Steffensen and Colker 1982; Oliver 2013; Devanesen and Maher 2003, 2008). Sadly, that discussion was beyond the scope of this current article. And as the whole of these communities becomes more interconnected with their traditions and cultural improvisations, it is essential to keep in mind these ideologies and their epistemological understandings of the causes and effects of illnesses provide culturally relevant and safe methods of treatment. If not, even when aptly administering correct biomedical treatment for a given disease, these interventions may not cure it because the etiology of the disease, i.e. the ailment *Dreamings*, has not been addressed (Helman 2007:294-295). A great reverence for local culture is warranted here. There is a plethora of knowledge on the topic yet to be published, but the greater issue is respecting the cultural source and maintaining ethical, long-term relationships with our hosts and the living, speaking land that sustains us all. I cannot thank Mark Crocombe enough for getting me out on the land to soak in its cultural poetics and allowing me to meet the wonderful elders of Wadeye.

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[1] The Kimberley is a northernmost region of Western Australia by the Indian Ocean and the Timor Sea.

[2] The world-system of contemporary Aboriginal Australian communities including Wadeye is syncretic, combining both indigenous and non-

indigenous thought, medicine, and practice when dealing with socio-biological manifestations of illness. (Oliver 2013)

[3] The interpretative approach for medical anthropology deals with finding a middle ground in explaining health and illness that is shaped by societal forces and emic viewpoints. In short, the interpretive model looks at how a sickness can be constituted (in part) as a social production. I explore then the possible social dimensions for how these narratives, through their depictions of illness, shock one into a reflection of their current moment and connection to the land (reality).

[4] Mythogenesis may be further unpacked as *mytho-* or "myth" and *-genesis* "creation," to signify the artistic act of storytelling, along with the sets of meanings or cognitive patterns of expressive thought that animate live mythological and cultural worldviews. These creative acts, emanating from the human mindset of myth-making and mythogenesis, animate the social realities of living mythology present in people's lives and create charters of being (Malinowski 1992:326).

[5] The idea that *Dreamtime* can be a total phenomenon (as in provide a complete explanation and map for daily and ritual life) does not exclude it from syncretic interaction and integration with other worldview sets—i.e. that of Western bio-medical science or Christianity. In fact, it is often the case that local perspectives rely on polyglossic immersion to interpret events.

[6] The *Law* or *Creative Lawtime* is often used as a synonym for the *Dreamtime* by some authors like Erich Kolig in *Dreamtime Politics: Religion, World View, and Utopian Thought in Australian Aboriginal Society* (1989). Here, I mean to emphasize that the practice of each *Dreaming* has a grander set of laws defined by a practicing socio-cultural area, or territory, and then specific cultural protocol for each *Dreaming* site.

[7] This paper looks at illness as being influenced by one's cultural and psychological interaction with the body emplaced in a living ecology. The term "psychosomatic" then relates to the interaction of the mind and body and these elements in a greater set of relations within one's physical setting—such that there are multiple agencies for how illness might manifest.

[8] The *Creative Lawtime* is synonymous to the *Dreaming* or the *Dreamtime*, which is the system of traditional belief in Aboriginal Australian society that centres on the connection to Ancestor Beings and the formation of the world according to that cosmology. The *Creative Lawtime* is also shortened to the *Law*, which governs all of creation and without it nothing would exist. Each *Dreaming* is ruled by the *Law* or sets of metaphysical rules for how the universe operates. Each Aboriginal Australian language may have a unique way of referring to these sets of concepts.

[9] I was able to produce 106 pages of detailed, thick descriptions in small and dense handwriting, and I obtained almost a terabyte of digital data from the museum as well. I participated in many informal story recordings and interviews—even conducted some of my own set up through my network and connections. I supplemented my work with photography and media to fill in the context and jog memory of places and people.
[10] I have decided to include my own auto-ethnographic experience for this exploration of ailment narratives in order to empathetically theorize from an introspective standpoint as well as have greater access to a subjective-embodied self's experience of consciousness in the throes of sickness.
[11] *Kirrmarn* or *kirmarn* in Murrinh-Patha, the lingua franca for the Wadeye township, translates as "thinking man," "man who finds out," or "clever man." This term is understood as anyone who qualifies as a leader of the ceremony, or a knowledgeable person of *Law*.
[12] *Neurognosis* refers to the insight of the human cognitive architecture created in terms of the images, senses, and meanings that amalgamate from pre-cognitive awareness and experience to consciousness.
[13] Various ethnographic sources on sorcery and illness have noted that trespassing into another territory or *Dreaming* can have detrimental effects to one's health—the breaking of a taboo places one at risk from physical retribution, or payback, from both the profane and spirit worlds (Reid 1983; McKnight 1981, 1982, 2005; Martin 2008).
[14] Relations are identifiable clusters of information—organized from the simplest units of sensory data, images, feelings, and meaning—that are then rendered into the building blocks of thought, consciousness, and worldview. A relation would be 'self-to-world' and the content that fills that expression's identity as a relation in being a functional unit in the cognitive apparatus of a given worldview. Relations build both symbols and *mythemes*, the essential kernels of myth, in the human mind processing the world and lived experience. A *mytheme*, in other words, represents the smallest contrastive unit which may bring about a change of meaning in a myth, and clusters of *mythemes* combine together in forming the surface representations of a myth.
[15] An estate is a tract of land representing a traditional area owned by an Aboriginal Australian clan—often populated with various *Dreaming* sites important to that clan and family.
[16] The Australian continent is often depicted as a living entity in Aboriginal Australian thought and cosmology (see Mowaljarlai 2005). The artwork *Corpus Australis* illustrates this (Dussart, and H. Morphy 2005). It would also follow that if land is living—as a fused-extension of the Ancestor Beings and their sacred essence(s)—then it would also reason that these entities can become sick. In fact, many of the geographies become contagious with illness and spread it to the living.

[17] This textual reference is referring to how neurocognitive processes and consciousness interact with and influence each other—that human sociobiology affects the nature of reality and physics, especially in relation to the term, *quantum sea*, as the underlying structure of "zero-point" energy that permeates the universe—a quantum sea, as it were, and a point of fluctuation for physics that is manipulated by perceptual and cultural constructs (Puthoff 1990).

[18] The term *poesis* is the Greek word for the skill of art (essentially, poetry), and it literally means to "make" or to "formulate." *Poesis* also comprises the substantive materials of art—both the experience and the sustenance, poetic details—that enables a myth, or *mythos*-as-world, to last in the mind of an embodied-subjective self simulating Aboriginal Australian cosmology.

[19] Only the two brothers of Manada survive to ardently prevent others from coming in contact with the trees of the dead and their sickness. The brothers become transformed themselves spirit-guardians of the ailment *Dreaming*, whom shocked by empathy and the deep register of suffering in others as an impetus to accept their worldview and role as key *Dreamtime* figures.

[20] The analogy here to trees is deliberate and apt. It is possible as sickness transfigures the body that Aboriginal Australians saw this part of the human body's way of returning to the living land as an Ancestor Being fused with the landscape and sacred geography at a *Dreaming* site.

[21] Western biomedicine was not all that effective in quelling the affliction. In fact, I found local advice to be more reassuring and helpful in dealing with this temporary yet intense condition.

[22] There is much that needs to be filled in, saturated and documented, in terms of a more exhaustive, grounded exploration of myth and ailment narratives, especially as culture continues to shift in terms of its models of medicine and cosmology in Aboriginal Australian communities (see Baer 1996; Devanesen and Maher 2003, 2008; Oliver 2013). Researchers, organizations, and stakeholders might then benefit in the North if they all band together in sharing data sets and resources to (re)work budding theoretical pictures as they develop and to navigate the phenomenology of myth in understanding core culture. True to this ethos, cross-disciplinary research collaboratives often form together in the region—such as the Murriny Patha Song Project, or even the Wadeye Aboriginal Languages Centre—to complete specific tasks or further long-term goals. I have met many academic contacts in the region, and I would be glad to combine efforts in documenting Aboriginal Australian histories.

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“THE INS CANNOT SIMPLY SEND THEM OFF INTO THE NIGHT:” THE LANGUAGE OF DETENTION IN US COURT CASES ON MIGRANT CHILD DETENTION

ANNA THOMPSON

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue that the language used by American court cases allows for the differential application of rights and treatment of children in detention. In what become known as the Central American Refugee Crisis, the US-Mexico border experienced an increase in the number of unaccompanied children and family groups between 2011 and 2014. Apprehended children and their families were placed in detention centers. From an analysis of three court cases all pertaining to the detention of migrant children, I argue that the American courts’ language allows for a differential application of rights and treatment for children in detention by considering a child as both an “alien” and a “minor,” using the ambiguous principle of “best interests,” and using a child’s familial status in decisions made about their detention.

INTRODUCTION

The number of unaccompanied children crossing the US-Mexico border has drastically increased in recent years, rising from 15,949 to 68,551 between 2011 and 2014 (Rosenblum 2015: 3). Deemed the “Central American Refugee Crisis” by the American media, the term became widespread (Hiskey et al. 2016:1). In 2014, President Barack Obama referred to it as an “urgent humanitarian crisis” of the “influx of unaccompanied alien children across the southwest border” (Obama 2014). The government’s proposed response to the massive

increase of unattended children crossing into the US was to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish an interagency Unified Coordination Group, granting federal agencies more resources by providing personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and other technical and managerial services (Obama 2014). The response included expanding the number of detention facilities for families and children. While the migration of children and families into the US via the southern border is not a new phenomenon, neither is the detention of children and families by the Federal Government. In this paper, I will investigate the problems of normalizing processes found in the language of court cases, specifically the court's "best interests of a child" rhetoric, first seen in *Flores v. Meese* (1991), which has allowed for the mass detention of children by the U.S. government. This research aims to understand how the language used in court cases allows for immigrant children held in detention to experience a differential distribution of rights.

BACKGROUND

This paper questions the 'common sense-ness' of the detention of thousands of children by the US government through an anthropological lens that addresses cultural assumptions around detention, children, and the unequal relations of power found in the discourse of court cases. I chose to use court cases because as examples of discourse, they offer unique insight into two of the groups involved in debates about the detention of children: the judicial system which interprets the laws surrounding said detention, and the agencies which detain the unaccompanied children and 'family units.' My selection of cases focused of children detained when crossing into the US via the US-Mexico border. Data was collected from the opinion section of three court cases, each detailing the detention of children following their crossing of the US-Mexico border, primarily without parents. The "opinion" of a court case refers to the written statement of the court following oral argument; in this the court sets out its judgment and reasoning for the ruling decision (Supreme Court of the United States 2018: Accessed June 12, 2018). As the court's official decision on a case, the written opinion section produces and justifies certain social practices, such as the detention of children who cross along the US-Mexico border (Kronick and Rousseau 2015: 549).

It is important to make clear that the movement of migrants across the US-Mexico border is not a new phenomena and that President Obama's response was a continuation of increasing border security near urban areas that began in the mid 1990's (De León 2012: 479). This increase in security effectively shifted undocumented migration into remote areas like the Sonora Desert, where the border was more penetrable but the physical conditions of crossing were more arduous (De León 2012: 479). President Bill Clinton campaigned during this period to "regain control" of the border which lead to the dramatic increase in funding for Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) (Andreas 2001: 113). The Prevention Through Deterrence (PTD) policy, implemented in 1993-1994 by the INS, lead to the US-Mexico border becoming an increasingly militarized zone (De León 2012: 479). Prior to September 11, 2001, families who crossed into the US were often released due to limited space for family housing units (Hawkes 2009: 172). Following September 11, 2001, the border region saw an increase in enforcement along the border and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) became more stringent with their policies on family release and began to separate children from adults. The DHS argued that separating children from the adults they traveled with was necessary based on reports of alien smugglers "renting" children to travel with illegally entering adults in hopes of passing as a family and thus avoiding detention under the automatic family release policy (*Bunikyte v. Chertoff* 2007). While this policy may have removed some children from dangerous situations, it also broke up legitimate family groups and by 2006, Congress has called for the DHS to change its policy of family separation resulting in the conversion of a medium security prison to a family detention center due to lack of housing space available for families in existing DHS facilities (Hawkes 2009: 173).

As framed by the American media, the past decade has seen elevated levels of violence and widespread international gang activity in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, creating what the media deemed as a "deadly crisis" (Moulton, Leach, and Ferreira 2016: 1). In 2014, the number of families arriving from Central America reached a peak of 137,000 migrants; the highest reported level of migrants arriving between 2011-2014 (Rosenblum 2015: 2).

FRAMEWORK

This research builds upon emerging literature within anthropology on childhood and children's rights. Engaging in the "tensions and contradictions" of children and childhood, this research identifies children as an entry point into conversations about politics and compassions (Uehling 2008: 835). The complicated legal relationship between undocumented children and the US government is made increasingly complex by differing cultural constructions of childhood (Uehling 2008: 836). These children often see themselves as "mature and ready for responsibility" in their nation of origin (Uehling 2008: 836). Although children as individual actors have a role in their transnational movement, their agency is diluted by the US government due to their perceived vulnerable status, which is seen as determined by age and intellectual ability (Hess and Shandy 2008: 767). Further, undocumented migrant children to the US, especially those of color, are viewed as simultaneously as some of the most vulnerable of the population and as a security risk (Uehling 2008: 837).

Concerned with the relations of power and inequality in language, I will engage in a critical discourse analysis to look at the "transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control manifested in language" (Wodak 2011:53). Critical discourse analysis assumes that discourses, like court cases, are socially constructed and conditioned (Wodak 2011:53). It treats language used in speech and writing as social practice that implies a relationship between an event, a situation, an institution, and the social structures that frame it (Wodak 2011:50-1). Engaging in this discourse allows anthropologists to point out the "crucial role of symbolic meaning and language in producing and sustaining inequalities." (Hallett and Arnold 2016). When anthropologists construct migrants as "objects" of a study, they become involved in the production of the "other" and the production of the "state" that prosecutes their "illegality" (De Genova 2002: 423). The "illegality" or "others" plays a key role in the creation of identity and the perpetuation of monolithic ideas about citizenship liked to the state (Genova 2002: 425). Anthropologists like De Genova see the use of "immigration" or "immigrant" as problematic, as it contributes to the production of "essentialized, generic, and singular objects (2002:421).

An alien is defined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as "any person not a citizen or national of the United States" (US Department of Homeland Security: Accessed March 22, 2017). Children who cross the US-Mexico border pose a particular challenge to law and border enforcement due to the two-sided nature of their identity as aliens and as minors. Migrant children present a challenging dichotomy: a "threatening other" that overlays a "vulnerable child" (Kronick and Rousseau 2015: 549). Their dual status hinges on the liminal legal status as an alien that is placed against their vulnerable social status as a child suggesting a contrast or difference in treatment between the two statuses. Their status is liminal due to the transitional and threshold nature of undocumented migrants in the US. Moreover, the liminality of their status is created through the state of exception in which they are detained, where the terms and conditions of their possible release or deportation are uncertain. A child has a unique position in immigration law as they hold a legal status that is not simply "alien" in comparison to the status afforded to adults.

The contention surrounding the duality of children's status during persecution is apparent in *Flores v. Meese* (1991). Although Judge Mary Murphy Schroeder, a Ninth Circuit judge who sat on the case, argued in *Flores v. Meese* (1991) that "any person present in the United States is entitled to equal justice under the law" and that "alienage does not prevent a person from testing the legality of confinement" the entitlement to equal justice of alien minors is challenged. This case lead to the Flores Settlement Agreement in 1997, which provided the first set of national guidelines in the U.S. for the detention, treatment, and and release of children held by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Building on the work of Susan Terrio (2015) who articulates the difference in plaintiff's rights as aliens and as minors, my analysis also reveals how the rights of a minor are placed against their alien status. In *Flores v. Meese* (1991), the court demonstrates how the two sides, the alien side and the minor side, of an undocumented child are weighted against each other:

> *The plaintiffs are not only aliens; they are also minors*. The INS contends that this factor materially changes the nature of their liberty interest, thereby rendering the

> detention policy reasonable and appropriate. We therefore turn to the *question of what effect the juvenile status of these plaintiffs may have on the analysis of their liberty interests* and the protections that must be given to those interests (*Flores v. Meese* 1991; italics added).

The opinion of the court starts from the assumption that when considering the rights of a migrant child, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cannot only look at the "alien," but that they also must consider the "minor" that is being detained. A detained child's identity is thus divided into two separate legal statuses to be considered by the court: that of an undocumented alien and that of a minor. This established that the rights of an alien are not the same as the rights of a minor. The INS views these two statuses as mutually exclusive; if a child is an alien, their status as a minor is disregarded. The court then questions what the minority status of a child does to change an individual's interest in liberty. The disagreement between the INS and the court on if an alien's age should impact their treatment demonstrates how the interpretive nature of the law allows for the differential application of rights for children in detention.

Children's special status are attested to in *Reno v. Flores* (1993): "In the case of arrested alien juveniles, however, the INS cannot simply send them off into the night on bond or recognizance." *Reno v. Flores* (1993) challenged the practice of the INS in regards to unaccompanied children and the dual status of detained children:

> In the case of each detained alien juvenile, the INS makes those determinations that are specific to the individual and necessary to accurate application of the regulation: Is there reason to believe the *alien deportable*? Is the *alien under 18 years of age*? Does the alien have an *available adult relative or legal guardian*? Is the alien's case so exceptional as to require consideration of release to someone else? The particularization and individuation need go no further than this (*Reno v. Flores* 1993; italics added).

This short passage allows us to see how the identity of a child is broken down into an "alien" and a "minor." Here the alienage of the child supersedes consideration of their age, with the INS first

establishing if the alien is deportable, regardless of age. The personal identity of a child is limited to the four questions from the quote above (*Reno v. Flores* 1993). When the age of the child is addressed, establishing a child as an alien minor, the child is then connected to an "available adult," linking the concept of being a child not only to age but to the presence of an adult relative or legal guardian who can then take responsibility for the child. The quote then follows these questions by asking if the person (the child) in question is indeed a deportable alien, under the age of 18, and not having an available adult relative or legal guardian can be released to someone else. While it can be contended that the second and third questions pertain to the status of a child as a minor placing the primary status of the child in question as a minor, the initial question in the sequence looks only at deportability. Thus, initially only considering if the individual is an alien. The lack of "particularization and individuation" associated with a child in detention can be interpreted as an example of what Agamben (1998) describes as "bare life," or the stripping of an individual down to their biological makeup. This stripping of individual agency creates a class of unnamed masses who can be acted upon (Agamben 1998). Here an individual child is reduced to just that, part of a crowd of undocumented migrants who have no individual, personal identity.

Child aliens are a risk to national security not because of their vulnerable status as a minor, but because of the threat they pose as an alien. The perceived risk that these children pose to US national security is tempered with the politics of compassion, which addresses these children as the "vulnerable of the vulnerable" (Uehling 2008: 837). This stance reinforces that American cultural assumption of childhood that address children as being different from adults based on their emotional and educational development (Uehligh 2008: 836). This discourse of children as vulnerable victims however, comes after then "threatening" status as an alien posing a security risk in *Reno v. Flores* (1993).

Children provide a lens between humanitarianism and security concerns that allows for us to see an intersection between politics and compassion (Uehling 2008: 847). While the image of a child may provoke feeling of sympathy and a desire to protect such a vulnerable population, when a child is also an alien, they become imbued with risk. Specifically, the perceived risk they pose to the

security of the US (Uehling 2008: 837). This 'risk' and the 'threat' that these children pose are linked to cultural assumptions in the US that undocumented migration to the US is a "problem" (De Genova 2002: 421).

The judicial system thus serves a kind of check that separates itself from the actions of federal agencies. Interpreting the United States Constitution the individual actions of the judges in *Flores v. Meese* (1991) reject the claim by the INS that the best interest of child must lay in detention rather than in release. The use of language by the court throughout these cases in opposition to arguments of the INS or DHS reveal that within "the state" there is no unanimous decision of how a child should be treated or how their rights should be distributed.

BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

The principle of best interest reflects a standard of childcare that places the needs and wellbeing of a child as superior, but superior to what? Even with the agreed upon criteria that is supposedly considered by the courts, the opinions of the court cases offer a variety of outcomes when the principle of "best interest" is considered (Dalrymple 2006: 144; Rodriguez 2016: 156). The ambiguity of the principle arises from the assumption that it is transparent and that between users there is a shared understanding (Rodriguez 2016: 156). This principle allows for actors to make decisions about the welfare of a child under normative ideas of "good" parents and "ideal" families in which; in the case of detained children, a "good" parent or guardian is one who is not also in detention and who is legally in the US.

The problems arising from the ambiguity of the "best interests" metric are crystallized in judicial opinions and the application of child welfare policies. The symbol of a child as vulnerable and needing protection prompts this principle in which welfare of the child is protected by state actors. The child welfare system in the US emphasizes child protection and family reunification, but takes on different meanings depending on the circumstances of each child (Rodriguez 2016: 156). Yet within the six court cases analyzed in this paper, there was no clear definition of what the "best interests" of a child entailed. I will show that this lack of a clear and precise

definition enables this principle to be a place of discrimination on the basis of nationality and age.

In *Flores v. Meese* (1991), the blanket policy of the INS for the detention of unaccompanied minors was challenged as being unlawful because it did not acknowledge a child's rights to freedom under the Fourth Amendment. The principle of "best interest" is first considered by the INS as a justification for the continued detention of unaccompanied children instead of their release to qualified child welfare agency or foster care system. The INS agreed that if there was an adult relative or legal guardian available the child would be released into their custody, but remained adamant that if neither was available the child would not be released even if there was another responsible adult willing to care for the child.

> One of the very reasons the INS gives for detaining the plaintiffs is that it *does not have the expertise*, and *Congress has not given it the resources*, to do the kind of evaluation of foster care facilities that state child welfare agencies do on a routine basis. The INS reasons that since it is unable to do such an evaluation, the *best interests of the child must lie in detention rather than in release* (*Flores v. Meese* 1991; italics added).

The INS argued that because their agency is not an "expert" in finding foster care and because Congress has not provided enough funding for the evaluation of possible foster homes that the default best interest of the child is to remain in INS custody. The "best interests" of the child are then presented as a default custody placement due to the inability of the INS to properly review foster care facilities. The vulnerability of a child is due to a perceived lack of capability to care for themselves - as the opinion later notes that "because of a lack of maturity, [minors] should have some adult custody and care." The American culturally assumed dependency of children on older and more mature individuals places the best interest of a child always in the custody of another (Uehling 2008: 836). In 2016, the court echoed this opinion in *J.E.F.M. v. Lynch* stating that children "lack the intellectual and emotional capacity of adults," and when children are "force[d] to appear unrepresented in complex, adversarial court proceedings against trained [government] attorneys" they are discriminated against due to their minority status.

The "best interests" is rooted in principles of family reunification and maintenance of parental rights (Rodriguez 2016: 155). This example shows that when parental custody is not an option for the child, the best interest of the child changes. The lack of expertise of the INS in the evaluation of potential foster families and child welfare agencies leads to the default placement of keeping a child in detention. If the INS cannot asses if a foster home or child welfare agency meets government regulation for the housing and care of a child, the INS concludes that for the welfare of the child they should remain in custody. Here, the best interest of the child becomes a default due to lack of expertise and resources. The INS, while not experts in child care can offer the children protection from danger of some harm. Rodriguez argued that "best interest" determinations are informed by a belief that the US is the best place for US-citizen children (2016). I further suggest that in the case of unaccompanied non-citizen children the "best interests" principle becomes a key argument point in keeping children in US government custody when the culturally assumed best custodian of a child, their parent, is not available. Thus, the desire to keep unaccompanied children in detention centers is inextricably linked to a child's dual status as both a minor and as an alien.

In *Reno v. Flores* (1993), the court expanded upon the phrase to establish that while the "best interest" was a point of consideration in the custody placement of a child in some circumstance (e.g. a divorce proceeding), it was not the only aspect considered by the court. The court establishes that it is "not the legal standard" for decisions around a child.

> Similarly, "the best interests of the child" is not the legal standard that governs parents' or guardians' exercise of their custody: So long as *certain minimum requirements* of child care are met, the interests of the child may be *subordinated to the interests of other children,* or indeed even to *the interests of the parents or guardians themselves* (*Reno v. Flores* 1993; italics added).

The court established that the "best interests" principle is not a legal standard that establishes a certain treatment for all children regarding custody determinations. The focus of "best interests" is in relation to

the child's parents or guardians' right to custody. The rights of a child are not addressed as being part of the standard of "best interests." Here, the best interest of the child is expressed as "certain minimum requirements" where if met, the interests of the child can be considered "subordinate to the interests of other children." A child in this example can be given different rights than that of another child ("other children"), the court is allowing for the differential distribution of rights for children if "minimum requirements" are afforded to both children. By establishing that children can be treated differently if certain minimum requirements are met, the court sets a precedent that allows for the best interests of a child to come after those of another child, a parent, or guardian. In this case, the guardian could be a state agency who has assumed custody of the child. The language used here enables government agencies such as the INS to place the "best interests" of their agency above that of a child held in detention so long as a set of minimal standards are met.

The ambiguous nature of "best interests" offers legal actors a site of translation for making decisions about a child's "best interest" under the assumption that this decision is self-evident. The "best interest" of a non-citizen, unaccompanied child held in detention thus becomes a default custody placement. The language used to describe this principle situates the needs of a child as being subservient to that of another child, parent, or guardian when "certain minimum standards" are met. Due to the nature of the US legal system where legal cases set precedent for further decisions to be made in similar circumstances, these ruling opinions establish that the "best interests" of a child in detention are negotiable depending on family status (or in the cases above, the lack of familial association).

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR OR FAMILY UNIT: THE DIFFERENCE OF RIGHTS AND TREATMENT

My argument for the differential treatment of children due to classification as "unaccompanied" or "family unit" builds on the work of Lauren Martin (2011) who argues that children accompanied by a parent in detention are treated as "child objects" in their parent's household, while unaccompanied children present a greater challenge to law enforcement as their presence cannot be as easily explained by parental coercion. The separation of "minor" into "accompanied minor" and "unaccompanied minor" plays a guiding role in

executive and judicial decisions around the treatment of a child in detention, such as in guidelines around release.

After 2001, immigration policy in the US fundamentally changed with policies becoming more restrictive, and the automatic release of families no longer a viable option in the eyes of the DHS (*Bunikyte v. Chertoff* 2007). Instead of releasing family units, the DHS increased its housing facilities for these groups so that more could be kept in detention. However, families were not kept together "DHS argued this was necessary because alien smugglers had begun "*renting*" children to travel with illegally entering adults in hopes of passing the groups off as "families" and thus avoiding detention under the automatic family release policy" (*Bunikyte v. Chertoff* 2007). While above I have previously explored the treatment of children as "aliens" and "minors" I now wish to draw your attention to the objectification of children implied in "renting."

The use of "renting" suggests that a child is an object that can be acquired for a price to be used by adults to avoid detention. The objectification of a child as a "child-object" assumes that a child is "apolitical, inert, and silent" (Martin 2011: 491). The removal of agency from children accompanied by parents or guardians also renders them subject to danger on behalf of their parent's actions. The child is further objectified as the "DHS argues that automatic release of families *encourages parents to subject their children to the dangers* of illegal immigration" (*Bunikyte v. Chertoff* 2007; italics added).

By "subjecting" their child to the "dangers of illegal immigration" a parent places their object-child in an unnecessary risky position. The policy of family release offers parents an incentive to bring their object-children into the US. Parents who leave their children behind in their home country are often demonized in US culture (Uehling 2008: 841). But here we see that parents are also demonized and blamed for inflicting the dangers associated with illegal immigration onto a child. The parent is thus criminalized not only for illegally crossing into the US, but for risking their child safety.

When children do migrate without the accompaniment of a parent or guardian, their position in state discourse as a vulnerable victim of their parents' migration is no longer applicable. The 1993 case, *Reno*

v. Flores challenged the practice of the INS regarding the rights of unaccompanied children as compared to those accompanied by their parents. It is important to note that prior to 2001, families entering the US illegally who were apprehended were often released rather than detained due to the limited amount of bed space available in detention facilities that had family housing (*Bunikyte v. Chertoff* 2007).

> The parties to the present suit agree that the Service must assure itself that *someone will care for those minors* pending resolution of their deportation proceedings. That is easily done when the *juvenile's parents have also been detained and the family can be released together*; it *becomes complicated when the juvenile is arrested alone*, i.e., unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or other related adult (*Reno v. Flores* 1993; italics added).

Part of the contingency of childhood is having someone who will care for you. Being a child is linked to ideas of dependency and the need for an older individual, a parent or guardian, to assume the role of caregiver. What separates a minor from an adult is that "[j]uveniles, unlike adults, are always in some form of custody, and where the custody of the parent or legal guardian fails, the government may… either exercise custody itself or appoint someone else to do so" (*Reno v. Flores* 1993). Complications arise when a child is not accompanied by a parent or guardian because the discursive construction of childhood implies that custody must be assumed by someone. This became visible with the sudden rise in the number of unaccompanied minors crossing the US-Mexico border between 2011-2014 with the "Central American Refugee Crisis" (Hiskey et al. 2016: 1). One of the outcomes of the high number of unaccompanied children entering these facilities was that children were not granted access to counsel during their immigration hearings. In this context, the complexities of the legal practice of precedent and American cultural assumptions around childhood become apparent.

Unaccompanied children face the predicament in immigration law as being viewed as neither fully child or fully adult. Their lack of parental custody means that their mobility cannot be explained by parental coercion, yet to treat them as fully adult is not an option as

discrimination by age restricts their ability to be released. In *J.E.F.M. v. Lynch* (2016), a nationwide class action suit was filed on behalf of unaccompanied children who were denied legal counsel. The argument for the children was that as children they "lack the intellectual and emotional capacity of adults," yet are "force[d] to appear unrepresented in complex, adversarial court proceedings against trained [government] attorneys." This argument compels us to consider the underlying cultural assumptions of childhood stated earlier in this paper. Specifically, that children accompanied by a parent are considered to be child-objects: apolitical, inert, and silent. While Martin's (2011) research has shown that a higher degree agency is granted to unaccompanied children as an explanation for their migration, the children in *J.E.F.M. v. Lynch* (2016) are stating that they too should be treated as minors lacking in maturity of adults. Here, children are arguing that they do *not* have the emotional and intellectual capacity for their own defense in immigration court. They are requesting that they be treated the same as their accompanied peers who are viewed as docile and passive. The unequal view of children accompanied by a parent vs. an unaccompanied child thus results in one having access to counsel in their defense hearing (via their parents), while the latter is treated differently.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to make visible the ways in which the language used in court cases allows for children held in US detention facilities to be treated differently, including a difference in rights that are afforded to them. Children who migrate into the US across the US-Mexico border straddle the line between alien and minor, while the judicial system and the executive branch, in the form of the INS and DHS disagree on how these two parts of a migrant child's identity should be weighed. The lack of particularization given to detained children who are first viewed as aliens and then as minors, reduces a child down to their biological makeup and enables for their classification as one of many in an undifferentiated mass of illegal immigrants.

The "threat" that their alienage poses is only tempered by American cultural assumptions of a child's vulnerability. Here, the use of "alien" to describe these children is also problematic. Linked to De

Genova's (2002) argument that certain linguistic terms like "illegal" help to produce "essentialized, generic, and singular objects," the use of "alien" is an example of "bare life" in which the individual characteristics of these children are reduced to their citizenship, or their lack of citizenship. The use of terminology like this by both the federal and the judicial branches of government, while offering a standardized method for communication, also contributes to the production of the state as a monolithic and unified entity. The language used by the courts creates a representation of individuals who cross into the US without documentation. The depersonalization and dehumanization of individuals to "alien" creates a form of legal personhood that is directed by "forced invisibility, exclusion, subjugation, and repression" (De Genova 2002: 427).

The ambiguous nature of "best interests" offers legal actors a site of adaption for making decisions about a child's "best interest" under the assumption that this decision is self-evident. The language used to describe this principle situates the needs of a child as being subservient to that of another child, parent, guardian, or the state when "certain minimum standards" are met. The nature of this principle assumes that specific circumstance of each child differ and therefore no blanket standard of best interest can be sought. As I have argued above, in the case of a detained unaccompanied child, this often translates to assume the best interest of the child is to remain in US government custody.

My research supported the findings of Martin (2011) who argued that a child's familial status influenced the way in which they were perceived and treated. I found that the language used in court proceedings suggests that an unaccompanied child is viewed in the court cases as a "child-object" that has migrated not due to their own agency but due to the coercion of their parents. For children who were unaccompanied, they were positioned as neither fully child nor as an adult. Their movement across the border could not be associated with that of a parent and so these children were seen as having a level of individual agency that was not afforded to their accompanied counter parts. In *J.E.F.M. v. Lynch* (2016), the children of the suit argued that they should not be treated differently than accompanied children based on this perceived lack of agency which the court linked to emotional and intellectual capacity to defend themselves in immigration hearings.

The voices of the detained children are not heard in these cases. For their protection, their identities are often obscured and while the act of helping to bring a lawsuit to court demonstrates the child's agency, their thoughts and opinions on their detention are not being told through them. Instead their voices are filtered through legal actors. Their voices are missing from this entanglement of many voices all trying to speak for them. Their lives, futures, and family are tangled together with the language of the US government as well as dominant public discourses, which restricts and often silences them.

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INKTOBER

ANNA HECKADON

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UNCOVERED (WRITTEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN ARTIFACT)

I've been sitting here
for awhile
used for something
different
than they
think.

If I had a voice
I'd give it away
tell them
what I am
why I am
but I don't.

Hopefully one day
they'll happen
on the
truth.

Otherwise
no one will ever know
the truth
my truth.

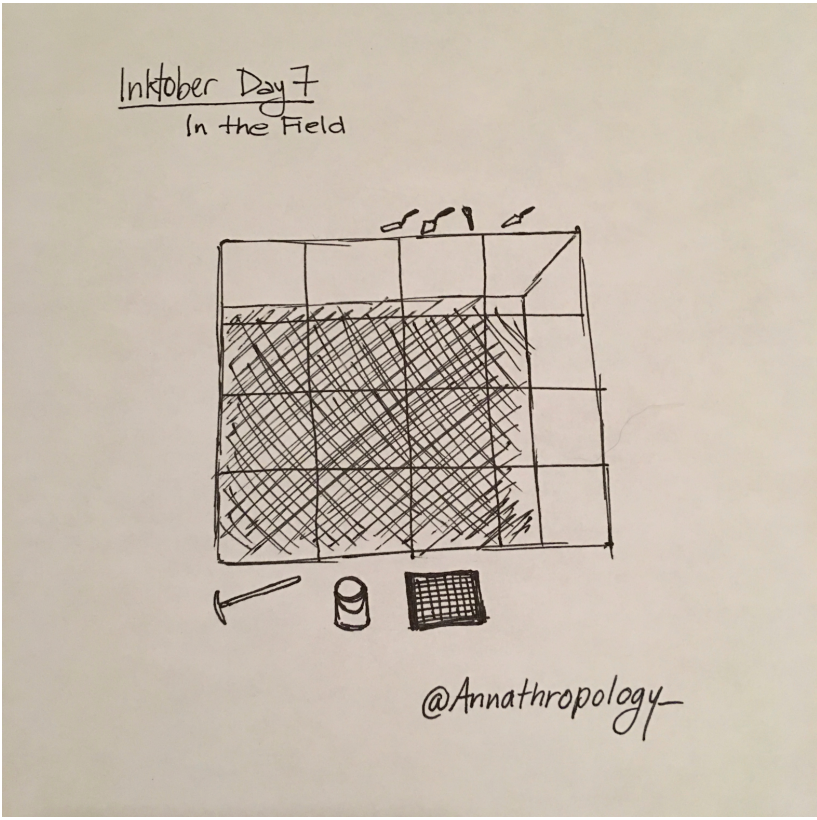

Figure 1: In the Field

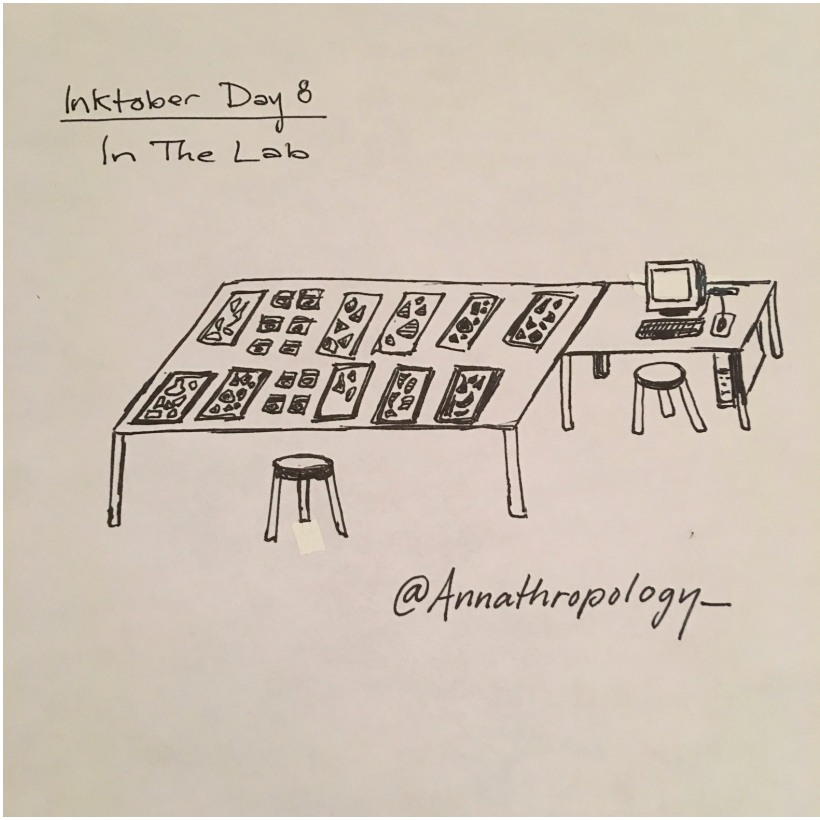

Figure 2: In the Lab

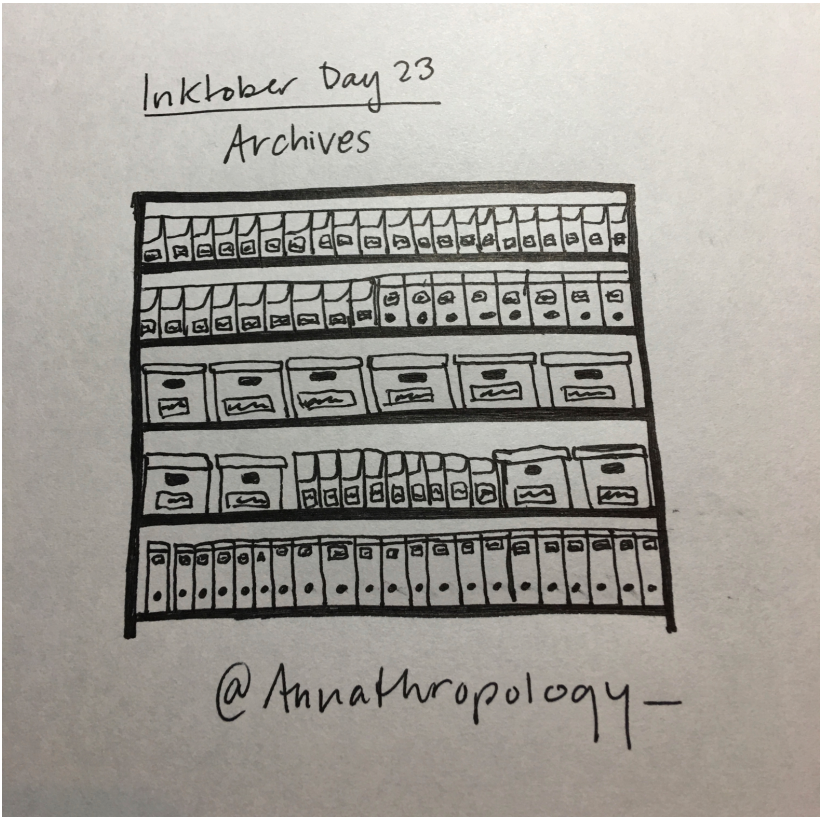

Figure 3: In the Archives

Trowel
short
handle
to hold
have to
get this
right. Do
not mess
up. Be
careful
not to
disturb
what is
there with
your
tool
we
do
not
want
to mess up
the past. Be careful
with what you are doing. Slow and
steady. Yet fast enough to utilize the
limited amount of time we have
been given. Everywhere we
use these tools to the
best of our abilities.
To find cool stuff.
Cool objects.
Cool shit.
Cool.
Shit.

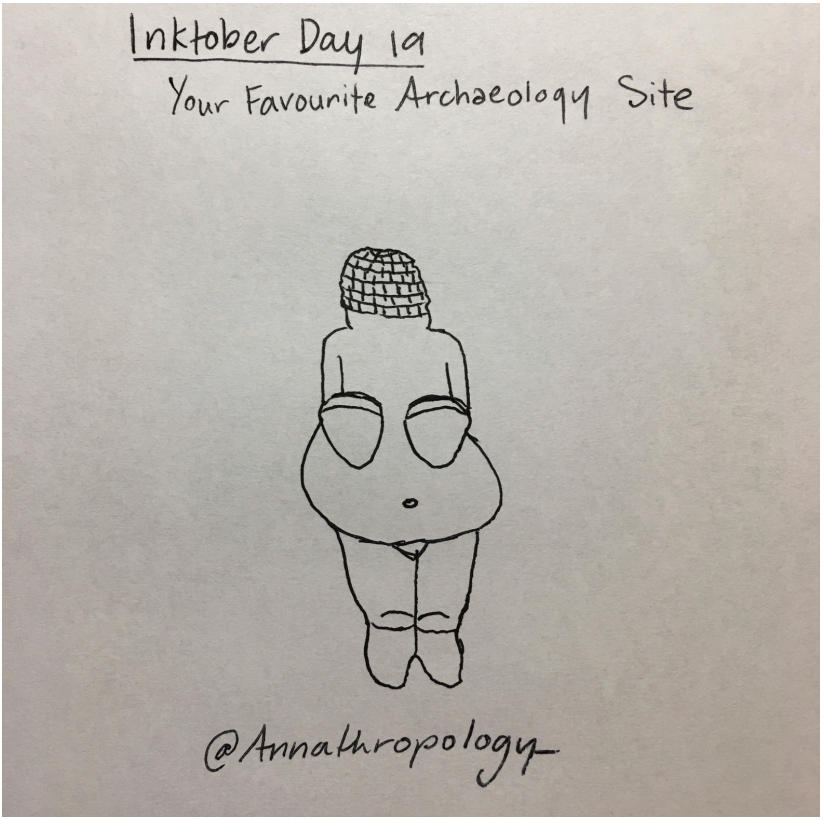

Figure 4: This is my drawing of the Venus of Willendorf. The figurine was found near Willendorf in Lower Austria in 1908 by archaeologist Josef Szombathy and is believed to have come from 22,000 to 24,000 BCE. Although generally thought to be quite large, it is actually only about eleven centimeters tall. It is made from oolithic limestone and is tinted with red ochre. It is considered to be a work of art and it is thought to have a function related to fertility.

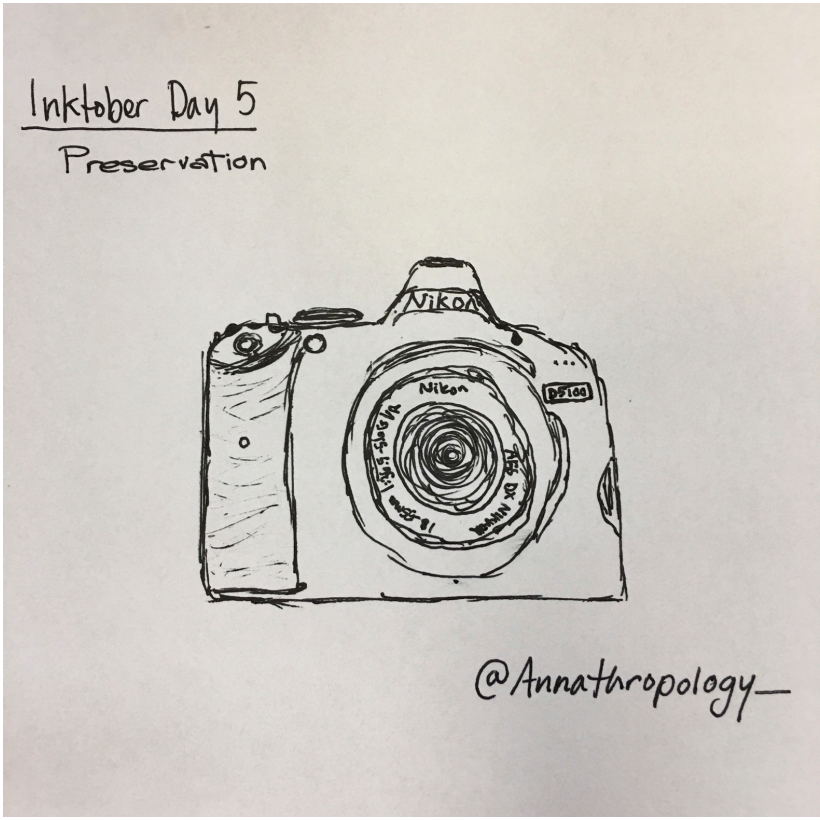

Figure 5: This drawing of a camera represents the fact that archaeology and anthropology are increasingly becoming more digital fields. Visual anthropology, the study of ethnographic film, is on the rise and archaeologists are increasingly using more and more digital tools to study sites and help with preservation.