# PLATFORUM

Journal of Graduate Students
in Anthropology

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Volume 14 2015

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# INTRODUCTION

The 2014 PlatForum editorial team is excited to share the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of PlatForum with you. Our journal is the longest running student organized Anthropology publication in Canada, and we strive to provide an accessible and open platform for all Canadian anthropology graduate students to contribute to. This edition offers a rich diversity of papers that reflect the individual interests of the contributing authors, yet the papers all highlight that anthropology is indeed a holistic discipline, as many of the contributors transcend the traditional sub-disciplines.

While the papers discuss a huge range of topics from diverse theoretical approaches, the theme of identity has emerged as a backdrop linking each of the contributions: the identity of societies, the identity of individuals, and the identity of anthropologists as researchers. The contributing anthropologists carefully question ideas that our discipline has once taken for granted and explore new possibilities and interpretations in their inquiries. The majority of the articles consider identity in context of their research subjects, while the final three have taken up reflexive considerations of how the identity of researchers influences their methodology and findings.

Reid J. Graham's article begins the consideration of identity by breaking down past stereotypes and assumptions made of Plains Indigenous villages. His work draws from ethnographic, experimental and historical production data as he explores an issue that has not been examined in recent years; the agriculture in the semi-sedentary Indigenous villages that existed in the Dakotas prior

to European contact. While the literature primarily views these Plains communities as nomadic, Graham draws attention to the often overlooked practice of agriculture in these Plains communities, and he also questions the traditional subsistence strategy categories used in ethnography.

Also aiming away from using traditional categories, Adam Solomonian examines the conjunction of identity in not only the Nuuchaanulth people, but also the identity of *Thliitsapilthim* ceremonial curtains as material objects. In this context he examines the *Thliitsapilthim* that were displayed at the exhibit entitled *Backstory: Nuuchaanulth Ceremonial Curtains and the Work of Ki-ke-in* at University of British Columbia's Belkin Gallery in 2010. He looks at these ceremonial Nuuchaanulth curtains not as fixed objects or artefacts, but as parts of a broader web of materiality that even includes what we can not know.

Angeli Humilde bridges the gap of considerations of wider societal identity and individual identity, offering a unique perspective in her case study on transnational citizenship in the Phillippines. She focuses on individuals' uses of multiple citizenship status and transnational mobility for strategic purposes during times of increased globalization, as well as how governmentality continues to be enforced upon citizens who are living outside of their country of origin. Sarah Fletcher, in her research focusing on the challenges and stress that face immigrant youth in Victoria, also continues considerations of transnational mobility's effects on identity. She approaches the issues of stress using an ethnographic narrative tool and a focus on collaborative research methodology, emphasizing the importance of youth perspective in her research. This allowed for the experiences and identity of both the research informants and

collaborative participants to influence the emerging focus on resilience in the research findings.

Dai Davies hones considerations of individual identity construction even further through consideration of gender identities and sexualities, as observed through the performances of by participants at a university games night. Davies addresses how performance and performativity are interpreted to understand identity and how they contribute to the gender identities and sexualities of those involved in the games night.

The final three articles focus on the role of the researcher, and how a researcher's identity shapes their research practice and methodology. Karoline Guelke's photo essay is an honest reflection about her position as a tourist, ethnographer and photographer at a birthday party in a Nepali village. Guelke's reflections follow the threads of authenticity and power in the process of taking photos and later reflecting back on her intentions as a photographer. Katie MacLeoud's review article of Allison Pugh's ethnography *Longing and Belonging* continues this focus on reflexivity, examining Pugh's research at three schools in her local community of Oakland, California. The article draws attention to Pugh's alternating roles as an insider and an outsider, her attempts and the difficulties to positioning herself as an insider in diverse communities, and the challenges of both of these roles.

Finally, Thomas Siek brings the focus to the role of training to researchers' identities, calling for an increased focus on the sense of touch in the practice of osteology, which is a discipline that has primarily relied upon the visual. Siek suggests that touch helps to transcend the barriers between the subject and the object and can offer details that sight alone cannot confirm.

As you read this volume of PlatForum, we hope that you will draw connections between the articles that will allow for broader conversations about what Anthropology is today. Anthropology as a discipline never ceases to adapt and renew. Anthropologists, such as the graduate students who have contributed to this edition, are constantly shifting their knowledge base and creating and exploring new techniques. We hope that upon reading this volume you will be inspired to reflect on your own identity, and how your theoretical foundations and methodology shape your scholarship as a researcher.

PlatForum aims to facilitate dialogue and be accessible, and to aide in this goal we will also be creating a web version of this volume so that it may contribute to an online dialogue from anthropologists across the country, and beyond. Volume 14, and earlier PlatForum volumes can be browsed online at http://journals.uvic.ca/index.

Sincerely,
Tia Hiltz, Betsy Hagestedt and the PlatForum Editorial Team

# CONTRIBUTORS

## 1. REID J. GRAHAM

Reid J. Graham is currently a graduate student at the University of Alberta, writing a Master thesis exploring the relationships between Late Precontact cultures on the Northern Plains. He completed an Honours Degree in Anthropology at the University of Winnipeg in 2011, and has worked at archaeological projects in all over Western North America. Current research interests include Northern Plains archaeological research, GIS analysis, communal bison hunting, and intergroup relationships

## 2. ADAM SOLOMONIAN

Adam Solomonian is PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. An interest in the anthropology of photography, materiality, and cultural memory informs his research with the *shíshálh* Nation on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. His research seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of: (i) how Canadian Indigenous communities are asserting self-determination in a globalized, post-colonial world through their visual and material culture; (ii) how new media technologies are combined with local protocols to ensure the appropriate management of cultural heritage; and (iii) how the production and interpretation of visual archives and collections by communities can contribute to processes of decolonization.

## 3. ANGELI HUMILDE

Angeli Humilde is a Masters candidate in Social Anthropology at York University and a Graduate Research Associate for the York Centre for Asian Research. She has recently completed her fieldwork in the Philippines where she was looking at issues of Philippine diaspora, citizenship, national identity, immigration, and transnationalism.

## 4. SARAH FLETCHER

Sarah Fletcher is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria and is the Community Research Coordinator at the Centre for Healthy Communities Research at Vancouver Island University. With a background in medical anthropology and community-based research, her research interests include immigrant youth, mental health, resilience, participatory research with youth, arts based research methods, health promotion and disease prevention, Aboriginal health and participatory research with marginalized populations.

## 5. DAI DAVIES

Dai Davies is in his first year of the Master of Arts program in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Davies recently completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology (hons.) and Hispanic Studies (major) at Saint Mary's University. As a gay male, he has developed interest in queer anthropology and the performance of sexuality and gender and intends to use his research as a way to further the understanding of LGBT realities.

# 6. KAROLINE GUELKE

Karoline Guelke is a PhD candidate in the department of anthropology at the University of Victoria. Her dissertation research examines the intersection of gender issues and tourism development in the southern Peruvian Andes. She conducted ethnographic research in the same region for her MA thesis on globalization and dietary change, completed at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include gender issues, globalization, culture change, Latin America, feminist theory and visual methodologies.

# 7. KATIE MACLEOD

Katie K. MacLeod is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University. Her research interests lay in identity, ethnohistory, legal anthropology, memory, settler states, and colonialism, specifically within the context of Aboriginal and minority populations in Canada. Her doctoral research focuses on how historic political and social relations between the Mi'kmaq and Acadians in the Maritime Provinces resurface in the present-day to be mobilized as narratives that reorient Indigenous-settler relations.

# 8. THOMAS SIEK

Thomas Siek recently completed his Masters degree in Public Issues Anthropology from the University of Waterloo and will beginning his doctoral studies at University College London in September 2014. His research interests broadly include: bioarchaeology, osteology and paleopathology.

# BUFFALO BIRD WOMAN AND HIDATSA AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES

REID J. GRAHAM

## ABSTRACT

The archaeological cultures in the Northern Plains region of North America have long been characterized as primarily nomadic bison hunting populations. However, semi-sedentary villages that focused on maize based agriculture existed in the Dakotas during the historic period and over a much wider range prior to European contact. The agricultural potential of these societies and the impact they had on neighbouring bison focused groups has been recognized only recently in the archaeological literature. The primary historic groups in this study are the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara, and the details of their agricultural technique stem from Buffalo Bird Woman account as recorded by Gilbert Wilson. This ethnographic data is combined with experimental and historical production data to illustrate implications for Precontact societies and relationships between different indigenous groups on the Northern Plains.

## INTRODUCTION

The Aboriginal groups on the northern plains region of North America have been a topic of interest for many people around the world. European explorers and traders were captivated by their

first encounters with these groups, and this fascination propagated the image of Plains Aboriginal people around the world, creating biased perceptions of what these aboriginal cultures looked like. Plains Aboriginal people tend to be depicted with long flowing eagle feather headdresses, buckskin leggings and moccasins, bow and arrows, tomahawks, riding among bison on wild mustangs and shooting arrows from point blank range. While these stereotypical perceptions of Plains society are rooted in some truth, they overlook a level of cultural diversity that is not recognized in the region.

Among these stereotypes are popular ideas concerning the manner in which Plains Aboriginal people obtained their food. There is a prevalent view that the region was inhabited by nomadic bison hunters who rode down their prey on horseback. While it is true that bison was an important aspect of their diet and cultural activities, agriculture played an equally important role. The ethnographic and historical records demonstrate the importance of agriculture to the diet of many Plains Aboriginal groups, however this aspect of their society is often forgotten.

The archaeological record emphasises the utilization of bison in the diet of many precontact plains groups, due to taphonomic and preservation biases. Since evidence for crop production does not preserve as well as bone and stone, it is important to seek other avenues to study food production in the archaeological record. By observing the ethnographic and historical evidence of aboriginal food production on the northern plains, we can better understand the scale of food production by precontact agricultural societies. In addition, by studying post-contact agricultural groups on the northern plains it will be possible to identify unique archaeological characteristics of the agricultural societies. This will allow for precontact agricultural societies to be identified in the archaeological

record. In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of agriculture to northern plains groups (Flynn and Syms 1996; Lints 2012; Smith 2006), yet its cultural importance is not yet completely understood. By studying the practices of historic agricultural First Nations groups on the northern plains, in particular the Hidatsa agricultural system, we can better understand the scale of food production within their societies, which in turn would provide the foundation for economic interpretations of the archaeological and historical record. The account of Buffalo Bird Woman as recorded by Gilbert Wilson (1987) provides a framework for understanding the impacts of agriculture in the archaeological record.

## CULTURAL OVERVIEW: NORTHERN PLAINS HISTORY AND THE HIDATSA

The northern plains of North America are a vast region, consisting of the southern portions of the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, as well as Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The landscape is dominated by a prairie ecosystem, including both short and tall grass prairie. However the northern edges of the region are best described as a parkland environment, where prairie and aspen forest intertwine (Campbell and Campbell 1994). Southern Manitoba is dominated by this ecosystem, as well as Saskatchewan and Alberta. The parkland environment is a transition from the prairie into the boreal forest ecosystem which dominates most of Canada.

In terms of subsistence, there are two major divisions in this region. In the west, subsistence strategies focus on the utilization of bison and wild plant gathering. These groups were largely nomadic, following a seasonal route and living in highly mobile tepees. This

lifestyle has been emphasised and idealized in popular culture, in particular the bison hunting. Plains hunters are often depicted as riding wild mustangs bareback across the open prairie, shooting bison from point-blank range with arrows and lances. While the use of horses for hunting bison did occur on the northern plains, it was only after the introduction of horses by Europeans in the 1780's (Brink 2008). Prior to European contact, aboriginal hunters used bison jumps and pounds to trap and kill hundreds of bison at a time. The archaeological record is rich with massive bison kill sites across the northern plains, stemming largely from these practices (Brink 2008).

The principle modern groups in this study are the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara. These closely related and allied indigenous groups were the main cultural groups in the eastern half of the northern plains who demonstrated a subsistence strategy that relied upon the abundant bison herds in the area, as well as a heavy reliance upon the agricultural produce from their plots (Brink 2004; Wilson 1987). Unlike the nomadic aboriginal groups in the west, the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara lived in permanent villages, consisting of large sod covered structures known as earthlodges, and would typically move back and forth between their summer and winter villages (Stewart 2001). The maize, beans, squash, and sunflowers produced from their plots would sustain these groups through the long winter months (Wilson 1987).

These modern groups are linked with numerous archaeological sites in the region with evidence of agriculture. Agriculture first appeared in the late precontact period and was introduced to the northern plains region in South Dakota. The earliest definitive evidence of agriculture in the region dates to about AD 1200, and is demonstrated by macrobotanic remains of maize and

tools associated with agriculture (Schneider 2002). Recent research challenges this literature dogma regarding the appearance of agriculture, with extensive maize use demonstrated across southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan earlier than previously thought (Lints 2012). Despite issues surrounding the initial appearance of maize in the region, it is generally accepted that from South Dakota the use of agriculture spread northwards along the Missouri River valley into North Dakota, and the southern edges of Manitoba (Nicholson et al. 2002). However, the general global cooling trend of the "Little Ice Age" in the 1600s caused difficulties with maize based agriculture, which led to a general abandonment of agriculture in southern Manitoba (Playford 2010). When Europeans arrived in the region in the late 1700s, agriculture was restricted to the Upper Missouri River Valley of North and South Dakota (Flynn and Syms 1996).

Contact with Europeans exposed aboriginal groups to new diseases and the confined living conditions of the earthlodges village ensured smallpox spread rapidly. A smallpox epidemic between 1780 and 1781 caused massive depopulation in the region; some groups lost up to 50 percent of their population, while the Hidatsa lost around 10 percent (Ahler et al. 1991:57). This demographic shift weakened the previously stronger agriculturalist groups, and would lead to an increase in raiding from nomadic aboriginal groups in the coming decades.

The independence of the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara ended in the 1830s, when another smallpox epidemic swept over the northern plains region. The already weakened groups were almost eradicated, including 50 percent of the remaining Hidatsa population (Ahler et al. 1991:59). Their nomadic neighbours, such as the Lakota and the Dakota, escaping the majority of the epidemic and equipped with horses and firearms, harassed the weakened agriculturalist

groups (Smith 1972).  The combination of these forces caused the remaining Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara people to amalgamate in 1845 at the Like-a-Fishhook Village, next to Fort Berthold, North Dakota (Smith 1972). They would remain here to farm and hunt in a traditional manner, until the near extinction of the bison in the 1870s.

## BUFFALO BIRD WOMAN

It is in this later period that the principle informant on agricultural methods was born. Buffalo Bird Woman, a member of the Hidatsa, was born in 1839, just prior to the amalgamation at Like-A-Fishhook Village (Wilson 1987). Gilbert Wilson, an early ethnographer, interviewed Buffalo Bird Woman in 1912, seeking to record what he described as traditional gardening techniques for the region. He asked her about the traditional ways in which she prepared her plot, the crops and tools she used, and how they harvested and stored their produce. Buffalo Bird Woman was extremely dedicated to faithfully recording all of her experiences, so much so that she would often lie on the floor while Wilson transcribed; too exhausted to sit, but refusing to stop (Brink 2004).

Buffalo Bird Woman lived during a time of intense social and cultural upheaval. Her people were ravaged by disease (Ahler et al. 1991) and were forced to join with other cultures in order to survive. Buffalo Bird Woman was six years old when the Hidatsa arrived at Like-A-Fishhook Village in 1845 and she was exposed to the traditions and cultures of the various groups living at the village as well as European influences from the nearby American fort. Nevertheless, Buffalo Bird Woman's description of agricultural techniques appears to be a continuation of a time honoured tradition. She states that she learned how to grow crops from her Grandmother Turtle, who was one of the last people in the village to own a bison

scapula hoe (Wilson 1987:12). Buffalo Bird Woman followed the teachings of her grandmother and tended her plot in a manner which would have existed prior to European contact. However, Buffalo Bird Woman also states that there were other families in the Like-A-Fishhook village who were not as productive as her family, and that she could not speak for how they grew their crops (Wilson 1987:16). It appears that the techniques described by Buffalo Bird Woman are from an older tradition in the region, but it cannot be applied universally to everyone. There would have been minor variation between cultures and even within populations.

## HIDATSA AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES

Buffalo Bird Woman described a step-by-step process by which an individual could create a Hidatsa plot. The first aspect involved picking the location for the field, since the Hidatsa are practicing shifting cultivation, they would be making new fields roughly every fourteen years (Wilson 1987). When selecting an area of land for cultivation, Buffalo Bird Woman said: "In old times we Hidatsas never made our gardens on the untimbered, prairie land, because the soil there is too hard and dry. In the bottom lands by the Missouri, the soil is soft and easy to work" (Wilson 1987:9). The softness of the soil and the ease of work is an aspect of Hidatsa agriculture that Buffalo Bird Woman often reinforces due to the use of bone hoes and wooden digging sticks. Since these tools were not durable, the Hidatsa would seek out soils that were easier to cultivate. The chernozemic soils of the prairies are rich in nutrients, but usually heavy and hard to break up. Sand and silt rich soils could be found closer to a river flood plain, and would be far easier to cultivate by hand than a clay rich soil. This restriction can inform archaeological research. The presence of bison scapulae modified to

be used as a hoe can suggest the presence of agriculture during an occupation. Archaeological sites located near timbered river valleys with sandy soil would be prime candidates to search for evidence of agriculture.

Buffalo Bird Woman further stated that the Hidatsa would select wooded areas next to a river to plant their crops. This is supported by other historical sources describing other aboriginal groups living further south on the Missouri and Mississippi river (Matthews 1971). These areas were heavily wooded and were cleared prior to planting. Buffalo Bird Woman and her family used iron axes to cut down large trees, but she indicated that prior to the introduction of metal tools, the Hidatsa would have planted their crops around the trees (Wilson 1987:13). Once the field was cleared of brush and trees, the Hidatsa women would cultivate the soil using wooden digging sticks and bison scapula hoes. They would also gather and burn the remaining tree and shrub roots, believing this process would make the soil softer (Wilson 1987:15). Buffalo Bird Woman would spread and burn the debris evenly over the entire field (Wilson 1987: 15), but her Grandmother Turtle would burn the debris away from the field (Wilson 1987:11).

The second step of Hidatsa agriculture involved building mounds for planting. The women would heap soil into large mounds four inches high, and place them three feet apart (Wilson 1987). They created long rows of mounds in their fields, in which they planted maize, beans, and squash. The crops were planted in a pattern, commonly referred to as the "Three Sisters." This involved the maize and beans being planted in alternating rows with the squash surrounding them and sunflowers planted around the edges of the fields (Wilson 1987, Figure 1).

sf                                      sf                                sf

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c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c    sq   c   c   c
  b   b   b   b   b   b   b           b   b
c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c    sq   c   c   c
  b   b   b   b   b   b   b           b   b
c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c    sq   c   c   c
  b   b   b   b   b   b   b           b   b
c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c    sq   c   c   c
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sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq   sq

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c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c
  b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b
c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c
  b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b   b
c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c   c
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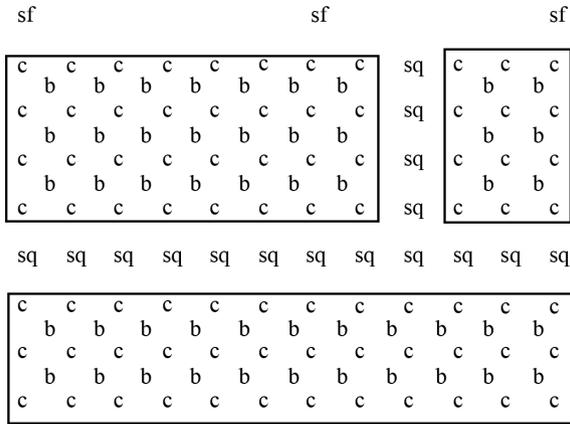
Figure 1: Schematic diagram of planting rows adapted from Wilson 1987

The combination of maize, beans and squash places importance on intercropping and the symbiotic relationship between the three plant species. Maize provides structural support for the bean vines to grow on; root nodules on the bean roots fixate nitrogen into the soil, which is a major limiting nutrient for most soils; and the squash leaves spread over the bare ground and protect the surface from evaporation  (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005).

The Hidatsa women would spend the summer weeding and hoeing their plots, and in the early fall the crops would be harvested and a large portion was dried for winter storage in large bell shaped storage pits (Wilson 1987). They were lined with willow and grass to keep moisture out, covered with a wooden lid and layers of earth and grass. This design kept the contents dry and free of rot, as well as helps to hide the food from raiders. These bell shaped storage pits can be found in the archaeological record in the Upper Missouri River Valley and north into Manitoba (Flynn and Syms 1996).

# SUBSISTENCE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Diet is one of the most important aspects of human existence. What humans eat and how they obtain it shapes all aspects of culture and this aspect was often noted and generalized in early anthropological research. Using these generalizations, anthropologists have identified four main subsistence strategy categories: foraging, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture. This framework was used for decades to classify different cultural groups, neatly separating populations according to subsistence strategies. However there are many flaws within this system, which have led to incorrect assumptions concerning the relevance and importance of activities among different cultures. Many Native American groups have been classified as horticulturalists rather than agriculturalists, which causes a biased perception of their society to arise. Hunting and foraging is emphasized rather than the production of domesticated plants, which does not correlate with the historical, ethnographic, and archaeological record.

Horticulture focuses on the production of domesticated plants. These groups typically vary from semi-nomadic to semi-sedentary, and the subsistence is divided largely along lines of gender; the men hunt for wild game and the women create gardens for vegetable produce. Horticulturalists utilize shifting cultivation, also known as slash and burn (Ferraro 2006), and typically use simpler hand tools made from stone and bone (Miller and Wood 2006). Another common feature of horticulture is polycropping, where farmers will plant more than one species together during the growing season (Ferraro 2006). The production yield in a horticulturalist society is often limited, leaving enough for the immediate family of the horticulturalists and none for trade. This

label has been applied to the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara, along with many other North American aboriginal groups.

Agriculture is the subsistence strategy that is most familiar to the western world. It is similar to horticulture, with the focus on the production of domesticated plants, but it is often associated with large-scale societies and state-oriented civilizations (Miller and Wood 2006). Agricultural societies differ from horticultural societies due to the larger scale of crop production, as well as the use of irrigation to boost productivity, and the implementation of draft animals for labour (Ferraro 2006). In addition, agricultural societies usually practice monocropping, which entails the planting of only one crop species in a field during a growing season.

The separation of horticulture from agriculture is problematic for three reasons, the first of which is that the underlying principle for both strategies is the same, namely the manipulation and production of domesticated plants for food. Secondly, the criteria used to separate horticulture and agriculture often overlaps. For example, shifting cultivation is a major defining characteristic of horticulture, but many agricultural societies will leave fields in fallow to recover nutrients. Shifting cultivation is simply a technique used when needed, and not indicative of a particular lifestyle or culture. Similarly, irrigation is supposed to be a unique agricultural trait, but irrigation is only used when the climatic and environmental condition require it. If annual rainfall is sufficient to allow for optimum plant growth, there is no need to irrigate. Thus there are societies that are classified as agricultural that do not irrigate. Finally, the terms horticulture and agriculture are used inconsistently across the literature. This is evident when studying groups in Central and South America. Societies such as the Inca are generally accepted as agricultural societies, due largely to the scale of their agricultural

activities (Earls 1998). The stone terraces that cover the Andes Mountains demonstrate their dedication to this subsistence strategy. Their system, however, would also fall under horticulture specifications, as they used simple tools such as hoes and digging sticks. In addition, the Inca did not use draft animals for labour, as they did all of the planting and harvesting by hand. So what appears to be a horticultural group is popularly considered an agricultural society.

In respect to the northern plains, the Mandan and the Hidatsa are traditionally classified as horticulturalists. While certain generalizations of the horticulture category are true, such as the semi-sedentary lifestyle and the use of domesticated crops, other generalizations are false. Specifically, the separation of horticulture from agriculture decreases the importance of food production in these societies, suggesting that crop production contributed little to their diet. Ethnographic and historical evidence has demonstrated that these groups were capable of producing vast quantities of agricultural produce for their families and communities, and that their diet was less reliant upon hunting and foraging.

## EVALUATION OF THE BUFFALO BIRD WOMAN AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

In order to determine the efficacy of the techniques used by the Hidatsa, the benefits of Buffalo Bird Woman's system must be studied. One such studied was done by Munson-Scullin and Scullin (2005), where they applied the methods that Buffalo Bird Woman described. A defining characteristic of the Hidatsa's agricultural technique is the employment of the Three Sisters, a method of polycropping. The symbiotic relationship of the three plant species

has been demonstrated to be extremely efficient in other regions of the continent (Kuepper and Dodson 2001). However, experiments have indicated that this combination is only effective in drier regions where there is less arable land and a need for conservation of space and water (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005). The maize and beans grow together, using each other to further their development in a smaller area, and the squash vines and leaves shade the soil from evaporation. These benefits are important in arid regions. In regions like the American Southwest where the Zuni farmed, this is an extremely efficient system for their climate (Kuepper and Dodson 2001). In contrast, the upper Missouri River Valley is a region with more space and plentiful amounts of rain. The Three Sisters system was designed for drier environments, so its benefits may not be as apparent in this region.

Experiments with Hidatsa agricultural techniques, namely those conducted by Munson-Scullin and Scullin (2005), have demonstrated that the three main benefits of the Three Sisters combination are not always apparent. From 2001 to 2003, researchers grew several monocrop maize plots, and polycrop beans and maize plots, following the instructions given by Buffalo Bird Woman (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005). Ideally the maize stalks would act as supports of the bean vines so that the beans get more sun exposure, however during the Hidatsa experiments the beans vines did not reach to maize stalks. The researchers found that the vines were often killed by rainfall splashing soil onto the plant and transmitting disease and fungi (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005:17). Another facet of the Three Sisters relationship is the nitrogen fixation of the bean plants. Measurements of the soil's nitrogen content were taken throughout the course of the experiment and indicated no noticeable difference in the amount of nitrogen

between the plots with intercropped beans and corn, as opposed to plots with only corn (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005:17). This contrary result is the result of the initial high nitrogen content of the soil, ensuring that the benefit of nitrogen fixating plants was not realized for the duration of the experiment. The benefit of nitrogen fixating plants could be realized in a longer trial, but the shorter experiments produced no added benefit. The final portion of the triad is the soil shading benefit of squash. Munson-Scullin and Scullin's (2005:17) results indicated that the squash leaves kept the soil cooler than exposed areas, but the squash vines would also tangle and knock down other plants.

In the case of the Hidatsa and their agricultural neighbours, the Three Sisters symbiotic relationship does not give any of the added benefits that were assumed to exist. This is not to say that the experimental plots were unsuccessful at growing produce. In fact despite the issues surrounding the implementation of the Three Sister benefits in the experiments, Munson-Scullin and Scullin's (2005) plots still produced on average 38 bushels of corn per acre. This level of food production would be satisfactory for modern farming. Moreover, the results of the experiment demonstrate that the Three Sister system was designed for specific conditions and does not always translate into other regions.

Another characteristic of the Hidatsa agricultural system includes planting crop seeds into mounds and maintaining them throughout the years. Buffalo Bird Woman gave no explanation for the use of mounds in her field, but this is also a common feature across North America (Kuepper and Dodson 2001). One theory proposed that the mounds act to stabilize the corn stalks in strong winds (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005). The Hidatsa use a species of corn known as Northern Flint, which is leafy and top-heavy,

making it prone to being knocked over in the strong prairie winds. However, when the corn is planted in clusters, the roots intertwine and it stabilizes the base of the plant. Buffalo Bird Woman stated that the Hidatsa would continue heaping soil over the maize roots during the summer, which is thought to prevent the stalk from blowing over (Wilson 1987).

Another possible function of the mounds is drainage. The Hidatsa grew their crops close to bodies of water where the water table is closer to the surface. This can be problematic since maize requires well-drained soil to grow, and is hampered when the water table is too close to the surface. The roots of the plant cannot penetrate deeply into the soil, which stunts the growth of the plant. Modern solutions use drainage ditches and pipes to lower the water table and allow for deep root penetration of the soil and a higher yield. The Hidatsa instead used the mounds to elevate the maize farther from the ground surface. The mounds need to be at least 6 to 8 inches high to allow maize stalks to resist the effect of wind damage (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005). By constructing a mound and raising the seed, it gives more space for root penetration of the soil before encountering the water table.

## CONCLUSION: HIDATSA AGRICULTURAL YIELDS – HISTORICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL

The question of production potential is an important one to consider for the northern plains, as it has implications for food surplus and economic power. Body (1998) considered the sociocultural implications of agriculture and food surplus in the context of the northern plains, citing an oscillating pattern of conflict between bison focused groups and maize based agricultural groups.

Agricultural products were greatly desired in this region, often traded over long distances (Lints 2012). Developing a successful agriculture system would increase the status and wealth of groups able to capitalize on the surplus (Boyd 1998). In terms of producing surplus, Buffalo Bird Woman stated there would be enough food from one harvest to feed her family without ration until the next harvest, but she does not give a specific quantity to the productivity of her field (Wilson 1987:58). However, when historical documents detailing the yields of aboriginal fields across the plains (Wedel and Frison 2001) are paired with the ethnography of Buffalo Bird Woman, a clearer hypothesis begins to take shape.

Historical documents from the late 1700s to the early 1900s indicated that on average, midwestern semi-sedentary agricultural groups could produce 20 bushels per acre of maize (Wedel and Frison 2001). Using Buffalo Bird Woman's garden as a proxy, her three-acre field would have yielded approximately 60 bushels or 3,360 pounds of dry weight maize. For her family of nine, each person would receive 373 pounds of maize for the entire year or approximately one pound of corn a day, indicating that, on average, the Hidatsa would be able to produce considerable excess. Experiments with Hidatsa agricultural techniques demonstrated a greater production than recorded in historic documents. The first year of a freshly broken plot yielded an average 38 bushels per acre of dry weight maize (Munson-Scullin and Scullin 2005:12). The subsequent years of production saw decreased production from the plots, which is common for shifting cultivation techniques; the results were, however, all higher than the average historical yields. Using Buffalo Bird Woman as a proxy, her three acre field would yield 6,384 pounds of corn in one year. Her family of nine would be able to consume two pounds of corn a day for the entire year,

without ration. These calculations are illustrative, as consuming two pounds of corn in a day would not be an ideal diet. In addition to the agricultural produce, the diet would be supplemented with wild plants, bison, and other game animals (Johnston 1970) Buffalo Bird Woman stated that her field could produce enough food to feed her family without ration for an entire year, and the historical and experimental documents support this statement.

These results demonstrate that there was likely considerable food excess for the semi-sedentary agricultural groups in the archaeological record on the northern plains. The traditional agricultural techniques in the region were efficient at supplying the population with a stable source of food, as well as surplus for trade. This trade would alter power structures and relationships between groups, affecting the movement patterns of groups living in the area (Boyd 1998). Evidence of agriculture at archaeological sites can be demonstrated by the presence of similar tool sets and techniques for food production as described by Buffalo Bird Woman. By tracking the distribution of agriculture production on the northern plains, we can inform our interpretations of culture change in the region.

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# SOMETHING LIKE ENCHANTMENT: NUUCHAANULTH *THLIITSAPILTHIM*, IN/VISIBILITY, AND THE MATERIALITY OF PUBLIC SECRECY

## ADAM SOLOMONIAN

## ABSTRACT

*Thliitsapilthim* is a term used in the Huupacasaht dialect of the Nuuchaanulth language for large ceremonial curtains manufactured since the late nineteenth century out of single or sometimes multiple sections of muslin cotton. The term is roughly translatable to "easily moveable interior partition made in a meaningful way" (White 2013: 775). In 2010, the University of British Columbia's Belkin Gallery presented "for the first time, contemporary ceremonial curtains…and historical curtains from museum and private collections in Canada and the United States" (Belkin Gallery 2009), and thus an opportunity to consider *thliitsapilthim* in an entirely new situation, one of cross-cultural dialogue and translation. Here *thliitsapilthim* take on a new role, or perhaps refashion an old one: not as objects that trouble the now clichéd categories of "art" and "artefact," but as objects whose very materiality present an opportunity to consider larger questions of Nuuchaanulth knowledge and its ethical engagement from a non-Nuuchaanulth perspective. Drawing on recent discussions of materiality, visual culture, and affect I argue that where the public display of Indigenous cultural objects was once

the site to raise questions of access to and restriction of cultural knowledge (Myers 2002; Townsend-Gault 2004), it is now the site for new questions that emerge from an already-given understanding that objects are, at least partially, unknowable and even ultimately invisible in many ways, while still being physically present.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the relationships between materiality and affect that bring to our attention issues of in/visibility. Drawing on recent discussions of materiality, visual culture, and affect, I argue that where the public display of Indigenous cultural objects was once the site to raise questions of access to and restriction of cultural knowledge (Myers 2002; Townsend-Gault 2004), it is now the site for new questions that emerge from an already-given understanding that objects are, at least partially, unknowable and even ultimately invisible in many ways, while still being physically present.

I focus on a moment emerging from a public exhibition of Nuuchaanulth *thliitsapilthim* entitled *Backstory: Nuuchaanulth Ceremonial Curtains and the Work of Ki-ke-in* (Backstory) at the University of British Columbia's Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. The event took place during the 2010 Olympic Games held

in Vancouver. The objects in question are the *thliitsapilthim* themselves. Loosely termed "ceremonial curtains", they occupy a central place in the ceremonial life and cultural knowledge of Nuuchaanulth-speaking peoples on the west coast of Vancouver Island in what is now the Canadian province of British Columbia. This is a world to which I have no real connection, partly because I am a non-indigenous person, but that seems too unproductively binary. I am also more importantly not a Nuuchaanulth person, nor a member of a *thliitsapilthim*-owning family. As a result of my multi-leveled disconnection from these objects, deeply sacred to Nuuchaanulth owners, I attempt here to find a way to think about them in terms I can more readily relate to but that do not take away from their power as "unknowable objects" (Vogel 1991). I suggest that a line of inquiry based on recent discussions of materiality both inside and outside anthropology offers a possible way to do this. As an exploratory effort, I will engage in what Taussig (1999) calls a "characterization" of *thliitsapilthim,* rather than an explanation. In this way I avoid an appeal to a universal aestheticization that while unproblematic for some, seems to undermine the pleas of certain Nuuchaanulth people who maintain that *thliitsapilthim* are not to be understood as "art" (see Townsend-Gault 2000). I interpret this concern as an issue of mode of address and more specifically, my inability to find a way in which to appropriately address *thliitsapilthim* directly to understand what they might or might not "mean" to the people who make, care for, and have the right to display them publicly. As such, this is also an issue of knowledge and my lack of it in this circumstance. While I can claim to know something about *thliitsapilthim*, this is primarily attributable to the Nuuchaanulth people who have graciously shared their knowledge about them. I do not and cannot know enough about them to consider

what they mean to Nuuchaanulth people in any concrete sense.In my search for a starting point I returned to the moment when I saw a *thliitsapilthim* for the first time. It was not in a museum exhibition nor a gallery show. Nor was it in situ at a Nuuchaanulth "do", an informal title given to a host of Nuuchaanulth ceremonial functions. It was in a photograph taken by Ki-ke-in (Ron Hamilton) entitled "Wiiwimta-eyḵ Thliitsapilthim" which subsequently became one of the main promotional images of the Backstory exhibition. It was also an image that, like all photographs of *thliitsapilthim*, I do not have a right to show without expressed permission of the curtain's owner (a simple Google search will reveal for the reader images of the objects of which I speak here). In what follows, however, I use this unique encounter as a point of departure for my consideration of *thliitsapilthim* as objects with a particular agency that extends beyond their more "traditional" locale of ceremonial enactment. I hope to provide a way of engaging *thliitsapilthim* that does not depend on either the definitional limitations of art/artifact, or on the problematic negotiation of ethnographic and historical versus aesthetically-based regimes of value. Thus I am not as concerned with what *thliitsapilthim* are as much as I am concerned with what they do, or more appropriately what they have the potential of doing.

Here in/visibility operates as a key channel of affect in a complex relational network between human bodies, material objects, and more intangible forces of history, memory, power, and protocol. I understand in/visibility as an absence-through-presence, a feeling that something is missing. In/visibility can thus be sensed and carries in itself a certain affective charge. It is predicated on certain kinds of absences (of knowledge, or of actual substance such as the absence of imagery in this article), and also on particular "tactics of revelation" (Taussig 2006), understood as the strategic limitations of

presence that disrupt access to knowledge. I begin with a brief background discussion of *thliitsapilthim* and then move to a consideration of their materiality. Following this I discuss the relationship between in/visibility and access to knowledge that is made evident by *thliitsapilthim*. Finally, I present a different interaction with *thliitsapilthim* that draws on affective surges of "enchantment" (Bennett 2001) or "wonderment" (Clifford 1988), rather than context-based art historical or anthropological models, as a way to better engage their unknowability.

## BACKGROUND

*Thliitsapilthim* is a term used in the Huupacasaht dialect of the Nuuchaanulth language for large ceremonial curtains manufactured since the late nineteenth century out of single or sometimes multiple sections of muslin cotton. The term is roughly translatable to "easily moveable interior partition made in a meaningful way" (White 2013:775). *Thliitsapilthim* are decorated with various kinds of imagery, from the more "classic" icons of Northwest Coast First Nations cultures like Thunderbird, Raven, Whale, and Eagle, to less extraordinary but equally significant representations of people, places, and things. In the Nuuchaanulth world, *thliitsapilthim* are the post-contact iteration of a ceremonial partition-making tradition that has existed since time immemorial. Their precursor *kiitsakuuilthim* were usually made from large wooden planks and decorated in a similar fashion (White 2013). The Potlatch Ban imposed by the Government of Canada which lasted from 1885 – 1951 (see Cole & Chaikin 1990) forced the transition from cedar planks to cotton sheets that could be easily taken down and hidden away in the presence of the local Government Indian Agent (White 2013).

*Thliitsapilthim* were and continue to be used in the context of Nuuchaanulth ceremonialism. The objects and imagery are owned by individual families and in some cases by specific individuals. When displayed, they work to tell the history of a particular family, the property of the family, and a family's origins. The contention of White (2013) that the context of the Nuuchaanulth potlatch continues to be the main animator of *thliitsapilthim* leads him to argue that when separated from this context, *thliitsapilthim* are deprived of their basic purpose. *Thliitsapilthim* have been separated from this context through various means and put towards various ends for more than a century. They have been collected and displayed, both privately and publicly, in many non-Nuuchaanulth arenas (see Hoover & Inglis 1990). This separation does not, however, mean that *thliitsapilthim* cannot be animated by other contexts and serve other purposes.

I consider *Backstory: Nuuchaanulth Ceremonial Curtains and the Work of Ki-Ke-in* as one of these powerful moments of separation. This exhibition presented "for the first time, contemporary ceremonial curtains… and historical curtains from museum and private collections in Canada and the United States" (Belkin Gallery 2009), and thus was an opportunity to consider *thliitsapilthim* in an entirely new situation, one of cross-cultural dialogue and translation. Here *thliitsapilthim* take on a new role, or perhaps refashion an old one; not as objects that trouble the now clichéd categories of "art" and "artefact," but as objects whose very materiality present an opportunity to consider larger questions of Nuuchaanulth knowledge and its ethical engagement from a non-Nuuchaanulth perspective. Such a discussion must begin with a consideration of materiality. To do this I turn to an un-showable photograph and my first encounter with a *thliitsapilthim*.

## *THLIITSAPILTHIM* AS OBJECTS

Here is how it began. When I first saw the photograph "Wiiwimta-eyk̓ Thliitsapilthim," what struck me was not the specific content of the image itself, but the familiarity of the image. The photograph was like so many I had seen before in my life, a family snapshot taken to memorialize *some*thing (Stewart 2007) significant. Badly lit, poorly focused, awkwardly composed, it was as if I could have taken it, or it could have at least been in one of my family's albums. The people stood as I tend to stand on such a semi-formal moment: hands clasped in the front, uncomfortably rigid and unsure of whether to smile or to be more serious. Its vernacular qualities made this image what Elizabeth Edwards (2001:4) calls a *linking object* that draws connections "between past and present, between visible and invisible and active in cross-cultural dialogue." One of the ways it was able to do this is that it was not a photograph of a *thliitsapilthim* exactly, but a photograph of people, of a family, with a *thliitsapilthim* in the background. With people in the foreground, the object seemed more familiar, less dominating, or at least easier to get at.

Photographs have long been prized for their ability to tell viewers something "real" about their referent. This situation has often been discussed in relation to the colonial history of image-making (Ryan 1997; Maxwell 1999; Hight & Sampson 2002). The post-structuralist turn in various domains of critical thought has significantly challenged this assumed ability of photographs to tell the truth, or to be considered an appropriate index of their subject matter (Edwards 2001; Pinney 1997, 2003). However, there continues to be a resounding faith in the indexical qualities of photographic images. This presents a complicated and problematic conflation of the assumed "truth" of the image with the observable

"reality" of its referent. Thus it is the last part of Edwards' definition that intrigues me most here – what kind of cross-cultural dialogue about *thliitsapilthim* does this photograph help me engage in? What does it "tell"? I offer a slight departure from Edwards and argue that in reality it is not so much a dialogue, but more of a translation and one with limits.

The *thliitsapilthim* in the photograph functions as a material object and a visual presence. I argue that both figure into the mediation work of the curtain. Here I wish to consider the former more directly as the material potency is striking, but this objectness requires some unpacking. While not literally "the same," it is in the oft-understated role of materiality in favour of the visual that I find a shared ground between the *thliitsapilthim* in the photograph described and the photograph itself. As Edwards and Hart (2004) argue, any consideration of photographic objects and their affective or performative potential that only considers their visuality – that only accounts for the photograph as image – is problematically limited. This is also true of *thliitsapilthim*. Despite this, in the discussions with Nuuchaanulth people that I have been privy to, it is always more about what is *on* a curtain rather than what it is made up of. I argue that their materiality is also key to what they are and *do* as objects, particularly in situations where their visual presence presents a protective surface, making invisible an unfathomable depth.

In many respects, the images on *thliitsapilthim* are essentially transferable to and able to be represented by other objects. The photograph that frames this discussion is exemplary of this process. They might very well appear on myriad substances from paper and wood, to t-shirts and coffee mugs (see Townsend-Gault 2004; Glass 2008). However, when placed onto large swaths of muslin cotton, this imagery is activated in a certain way that is

deeply entangled with its specific materiality. In one case involving this exhibition, a mourning family decided that their *thliitsapilthim* should not be shown for a year as part of their grieving process. It was agreed upon that perhaps a good-sized photograph of the curtain could take its place. Here, it is clearly the object of the *thliitsapilthim* rather than its imagery that is of concern. It is the thing itself that cannot be shown. In another case, a curtain that contained certain imagery that a particular family did not have prerogative rights to display was destroyed by request, but it was agreed upon that photographs of it could remain (Thompson, personal communication, 2009). Again it is the material presence of a particular object that is in question. Its physical display rather than its representation. It then becomes clearer that *thliitsapilthim* are powerful things. They are animated by their involvement in various kinds of relations – between individuals, families, and communities. But how might we consider the ways through which their object-agency is enacted?

     *Thliitsapilthim* are "things" in a material sense. They are cotton sheets of various dimensions, decorated with a variety of designs that illustrate a family's history and substances (paint of various kinds, marker, felt pen, etc.). They are also things that do things, they act. To consider this as materiality is not only to consider their *physicality*, but how this interacts with the world around it, where the goal is to "transcend the dualism of subjects and objects" (Miller 2005:3). Bruno Latour (1993) has famously critiqued the production of such dualisms as the work of "purification" that is seemingly hardwired into the modern constitution. In response to the subject/object divide, Latour posits the idea of the "quasi-object". Thinking in terms of quasi-objects allows for "a continuous passage, a commerce, an interchange, between what humans inscribe in it and what it prescribes to

humans… .What should it be called neither object nor subject"
(1993:149). Latour argues that there is no such thing as objects and
subjects, but rather there is a mixture of quasi-objects and quasi-
subjects, each thus becoming *actants* that are not only constructed
by, but also construct, a relational network of human and non-human
actors (Law 2002). I consider *thliitsapilthim* as Latourian quasi-
objects. They are "actants" that have the ability to be constructed by
and construct the world around them through their interactions with
other quasi-subjects along circuitous relational networks. Pinney
(2005:269) both builds on this concept and challenges how it has
been put to work. He observes that this agentive possibility of
objects can easily be thought of as dialectical process of "subjects
making objects making subjects" (2005:258) but that this requires
the problematic "suturing" of objects to a particular definitive
context. Pinney critiques culture-based claims to the so-called "social
life" (see also Appadurai 1986; Thomas 1991) of objects from this
position, arguing that

> [t]he fate of objects…is always to live out the social life
> of men, or to become entangled in the webs of culture
> whose ability to refigure the object simultaneously
> inscribes the culture's ability to translate things into signs
> and the object's powerlessness as an artifactual trace.
> Narratives of the social lives of things, they reaffirm the
> agency of the humans they pass between (2005:259).

This process Pinney terms (after Latour) "late purification," where
an initial concern with objects and materiality is soon predicated on
the "further colonization by the social and the subject" (2005:258).
In this state objects are only given their agentive capabilities by the
human biographies and social lives they encounter (Pinney

2005:259). To avoid this he recommends a different conceptual tactic. Rather than position objects in relation to some kind of subject-centered context (be it cultural, historical, etc.), objects can be positioned in relation to what is "rendered 'deceptive' and 'inexplicable' by the current dominant paradigm" (2005:262) of context-based analysis. As such, we need to look "for all those objects and images whose evidence appears to be 'deceptive' and whose time does not appear to be 'our' time" (2005:262-263). Interactions with things like *thliitsapilthim* are thus better thought of as essentially transient moments of encounter with the unknowable or the inexplicable.

This provides an appropriate theoretical landscape through which to consider issues of in/visibility. *Thliitsapilthim* might be perfect examples of the objects and images in which Pinney (2005) sees potential for resisting standard anthropological and art historical forms of classification. In what follows I hope to better explore their "deceptive" or "elusive" nature more thoroughly in terms of relations of knowledge and knowing. Furthermore, I will consider how this in/visibility presents potential for a more fruitful engagement with intercultural or hybrid moments *as* moments and not the overarching contexts Pinney (2005) describes.

## *THLIITSAPILTHIM*, IN/VISIBILITY, AND THE PUBLIC SECRET: SURFACES AND DEPTHS

Returning to the image "Wiiwimta-eyḵ Thliitsapilthim," the first thing that becomes apparent is the role of the *thliitsapilthim* as a backdrop both in the photograph and in its broader public life. This requires a consideration of "backdrops" more broadly, not only as photographic props, but also as transformative and performative

spatial objects that create both a tangible surface and an elusive depth. In "Notes From the Surface of the Image" (2003), Pinney uses ideas of "surface" and "depth" in relation to the production of photographic objects in postcolonial India. In Pinney's usage, *depth* characterizes the colonial, modernist gaze of photography that "privileges the time/space of photographic exposure" (2003:204) and allows images to perform their indexical function. Certain contemporary photographic practices in India resist this depth by paying more attention to and playing with the "surface" of the image – an activity that explicitly denies the intrusiveness of depth.

A key element in this denial is the role played by the backdrop. As Pinney observes, backdrops have a longstanding history in photographic practice. Often "backdrops are valued as a record of the subject's position in a particular actual space" (Pinney 2003:212). This purposing is what Appadurai (1997) has termed the "colonial backdrop." In this usage, the backdrop becomes part of the overall contextualizing apparatus of the photograph itself. Appadurai argues that colonial backdrops of this sort seek to localize the photographic subject and reinforce the realism of the image. At other times, a backdrop of a different sort may by used to directly reject "real" space in favor of something more fantastical, to manipulate the surface of the image. Appadurai (1997) dubbed this the *subaltern* work of the backdrop. Here the backdrop actively "resists, subverts or parodies the realist claims of photography in various ways" (1997:5; Pinney 2003:213).

For Pinney, the subaltern agency of the backdrop opens up a "space of exploration" that "fractures not only the spatial and temporal correlates that are implied by the perspectival window created by photography but also suggests a different conceptualization of the subjects who are made to appear within this

window" (2003:213). In "Wiiwimta-eyḵ Thliitsapilthim," it is the family that is centered and foregrounded in the frame, not the curtain. In this moment the *thliitsapilthim* becomes a backdrop in front of which people pose or enact a variety of other performances in different scenarios. Here we can begin to consider the work of *thliitsapilthim* as a space of exploration that Pinney imagines. Posed in front of this *thliitsapilthim*, the family is seemingly transported out of the Comox Community Hall where the photograph was taken, and transformed in a way. In just what way I cannot begin to realize because, as a backdrop, the *thliitsapilthim* also serves to mark out the limits of the photograph's surface. Subsequently, it defines the limits of my ability to know more about what is happening in front, around, or behind it, producing the range of in/visibility.

*Thliitsapilthim*, as backdrops either in photographs or in the "real" space of the Comox Community Hall, regulate this kind of in/visibility by strictly demarcating areas of seen and unseen. As one Nuuchaanulth woman and participant in Backstory explains, *thliitsapilthim* hide

> [t]hings you don't want people to see. Things you don't want them to see because it's a surprise. It's part of the overall effect. You don't want people to see the things that make your regalia function or whatnot. Personal things. Things you give out are behind the curtain. Private things. Things you don't want people to touch. You don't want people to touch the curtain. It's a piece of you. It's precious (Cassavant, personal communication, 2009).

In the same way they mark out the division between private and public space, *thliitsapilthim* embody a division of private and public

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knowledge. They do not sever the two realms as much as they are indicative of the way public and private are sutured together. Public knowing is always the surface for a depth of private knowledge and is a negotiation of who can know and what can be known. This is not limited to, as Comanche curator and cultural critic Paul Chaat Smith (2009) has said, a "who is Indian and who is not" kind of question. Though it might be a "who is Nuuchaanulth and who is not" kind of question. Regardless, it is a larger reminder that knowledge and knowing are always partial (Clifford 1986). As *thliitsapilthim* mediate this partiality they perhaps become agents for a kind of Nuuchaanulth "public secret" (Taussig 1999), providing a material presence of the inarticulable. Thus, *thliitsapilthim* reveal something, but not everything. They are elusive to most who encounter them. What they reveal, however, invites their interlocutors into an understanding that they do not and cannot know everything. This is similar to what Townsend-Gault (2004), following Weiner (1992), has defined as a certain "keeping-while-giving." This indicates that *thliitsapilthim* are directly implicated in a larger system of relations – that of First Nations and their increasing efforts at cultural protectionism in relation to the exploitative and appropriative tendencies of Canadian settler society.

A system of inequality undegirds relations between contemporary First Nations and the nation state as a result of a legacy of European colonialism and its assimilationist policies in Northwest Coast of Canada (Townsend-Gault 1997; 2004). Denying that this tension exists is not helpful, but it should not be considered in terms of an "us versus them" relationship, whoever the "us" and the "them" might be. Chaat Smith (2009) observes that the situation is far beyond the simple binaries of native and non-native. We are all implicated in the common process of shaping a (post)colonial present

that addresses and redresses a colonial past in ways that render dichotomous identities unproductive. Bhabha concludes in *The Location of Culture* (1994:255-256) the need to move beyond binary divisions in the many forms we might find them. Then we are better suited to view how cultures "interact, transgress, and transform" one another in more intricate and ultimately productive ways. Latour (1993) might agree, but the tension remains.

This tension takes on many forms, but is primarily rooted in a long history of "theft" (Kramer 2006); of culture, of resources, of land, of people, of property, and of knowledge. The (post)colonial present of British Columbia is characterized by a unique effort to confront its historical theft of knowledge in some ways which are better than others. Questions about the knowledge of indigenous people, reflected in terms like "indigenous knowledge", "native knowledge", "traditional knowledge" or "local knowledge", sit at the center of conversations about both appropriate redress and continuing abuse. This absolutely applies to the circulation and display of objects, especially if we are to understand objects as being/having a certain "materiality of knowledge" (Myers 2005:96).

*Thliitsapilthim* are the material manifestation of a very particular kind of knowledge. Not simply reducible to flattened categories of "Indigenous knowledge," or even "Nuuchaanulth knowledge." They are best understood as family knowledge or more precisely, they *are* family. This knowledge is ultimately private, but is nonetheless revealed in various forms of public display of and interaction with *thliitsapilthim*. Here enter the aforementioned tactics of revelation. The public secret, private knowledge and its protection are entangled with a public affirmation of what cannot be known or rather, "knowing what not to know" (Taussig 1999:2). In the

interactions between *thliitsapilthim* and those who are not Indigenous, not Nuuchaanulth, and not family, people

> know they cannot discern everything –ownership, status, privilege, family, rights, obligations – nor do they necessarily or particularly care to – what they do know is that they don't know, or that they can't know. The inalienable remains beyond them, beyond their reach. If this is so then protectionism can be effective (Townsend-Gault 2004:197).

However, to recognize that one cannot know *everything* is supported by a comfort that one has come to know *something*, or at least one thinks one does. *Thliitsapilthim* thus use their surfaces to reveal a limited "kind" of knowledge (Myers 2002). The degrees of this revelation are specific to moments of display and audience, but they share in common their partiality, their limitedness. This is a whetting of the appetite, so to speak. It is not meant to satiate, but rather brings into higher relief the fact that depth remains private, protected. This is the deceptive quality of *thliitsapilthim*. They present a surface that is easily taken for depth, but that is not even close. But what if we know this? We know they are deceptive. We know we do not know everything. We are all part of this public secret now.

If we approach the situation of knowledge and knowing, or an understood and publicly affirmed lack of knowledge and not-knowing, that surrounds and is embodied by *thliitsapilthim* as one in which their in/visibility becomes the basis for their engagement, what new kinds of potential does this present us with? If the goal is no longer to make it understood that we cannot know – or see – everything, what possibilities are opened up? There is a temptation to arrogantly try and force the unknowable into understandable

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categories as both anthropologists and art historians have long tried to do with objects of non-Western manufacture (Clifford 1988). As such, there is perhaps something more fruitful in acknowledging in/visibility and allowing it to remain as such. Here *thliitsapilthim* become objects whose potential lies more in their affect than in their *meaning*. As I will discuss below, it is here that those on the outside of objects can best hope to engage them.

## THE POTENTIAL OF *SOME*THING

*Thliitsapilthim* are thus objects that are inherently elusive or even deceptive (Pinney 2005) in what they communicate, or better yet translate, to those unfamiliar with or unrelated to them. They protect a depth of knowledge in providing a surface of partial revelation. They operate through a condition of in/visibility whereby physical presence is not tantamount to accessibility. However, we are past the point where this is a sufficient conclusion. In accepting the limitations and protection of knowledge as a given, we need to start asking new questions, such as: What do *thliitsapilthim* make possible? What is their futurity? How might they change the person? (Keane 2005:191). To a large extent this is clearly dependent on a familiarity between a particular *thliitsapilthim* and a particular person, and in a particular place. However, mapping the multiple trajectories and possible network reconfigurations is beyond the scope of this paper. Though it is perhaps possible to consider the moment, or *a* moment when something comes together, in which *thliitsapilthim* are actively involved; a point along a relational network of quasi-objectness. One needs not be specific. In fact there is more in remaining ambiguous if one is to avoid the contextual traps Pinney (2005) warns against.

This productive ambiguity is perhaps no better captured than by Raymond Williams (1977) who is critical of a course of analysis that seeks to understand the world as a collection of already finished products. For Williams,

> [t]he strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is the immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products. What is defensible as a procedure in conscious history, where on certain assumptions many actions can be definitively taken as having ended, is habitually projected, not only into the always moving substance of the past, but into contemporary life, in which relationships, institutions and formations in which we are still actively involved are converted, by this procedural mode, into formed wholes rather than forming and formative processes (1977: 128).

In this sense, the possibilities of *thliitsapilthim* do not need to be considered in terms of the larger, concrete contexts of which both Pinney and Williams are wary. They arguably can and need to be dealt with in the moment. Stewart (2007) theorizes the "ordinary" and its affective capabilities and presents a way to think beyond the specificities of time and context in her rendering of the ordinary as "surging, a rubbing, a connection of some kind that has an impact" (2007:128). Here the emphasis is on a productively ambiguous *some*thing that does not necessitate analytic classification in order to have an affect. "Ordinary affects" are the moments and things that "catch people up in something that feels like *some*thing" (2007:3). This appears to have resonance with Pinney's appeal to seek the "jolts and disjunctions" (2005:270) that objects present. Stewart's "something" then provides a necessarily ambiguous space for Pinney's deceptive objects, and more importantly palpable

in/visibilities, to impact without becoming dependent on the context of a subject in order to be affective.

The materiality of *thliitsapilthim* might very well catch us, everyone, up in something that is somewhere between individualized experience and historicized finality. They present to us a certain "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977) that is as undeniable as it is indefinable. It is potentially best understood as "enchantment" (Bennett 2001) or "wonderment" (Clifford 1988). Either way, it is something that caries a certain ethical potential. Jane Bennett defines enchantment as "a feeling of being connected in an affirmative way to existence; it is to be under the momentary impression that the natural and cultural worlds *offer gifts* and in so doing, remind us that it is good to be alive" (2001:156). Clifford (1988) similarly argues that rather than completely abandoning our wonderment and fascination with inexplicable or unknowable objects, we should embrace such encounters as ethically reflexive moments. In encountering such objects Clifford recommends that we engage them "not [as] specimens of a deviant or exotic 'fetishism' but our own fetishes… seen in their resistance to classification they could remind us of our lack of self-possession, of the artifices we employ to gather a world around us" (1988:229). It is through these different kinds of engagements that inexplicability and our lack of knowing become not hindrances, but the foundation for a new kind of ethical project. Here Backstory presents a moment that, in separating *thliitsapilthim* from their ceremonial context by displaying them in a gallery setting, allows them to work in new ways. While information about the *thliitsapilthim* are offered to the viewer – a curtain's owner, its year of manufacture, what it depicts – these standard art historical/museological tidbits pale in comparison to what is not being shared. Backstory is very much about coming face-to-face

with unknowable materialities and in so doing offers a potential space in which *thliitsapilthim* can perform acts of acknowledged deceptions so as to make us more fully aware of our own, to let their in/visibility bring us face-to-face with the tension that characterizes the past and permeates the present. They remind us of our ethical responsibility, that we are all in some way in this together and are connected now. In so doing, *thliitsapilthim* reveal the range of their possibility, their futurity, and their potential to enact change.

CONCLUSION

I have tried in this paper to wade through some of the issues being presented by the Backstory exhibition as the first time in which an extensive and diverse collection of Nuuchaanulth *thliitsapilthim* were displayed to a primarily non-Nuuchaanulth audience. Considering this moment requires a different kind of approach than a standard anthropological or art historical context-based model. In seeking to outline its potentiality rather than its actuality, this paper has sought to consider the moment through the objects themselves. In doing so, the materiality of *thliitsapilthim* as objects with agency is necessarily made central. As I have attempted to show, a consideration of this materiality is key in characterizing (Taussig 1999) *thliitsapilthim* beyond the purview of simplistic art/artefact binaries or problematic contexts.

Taken as objects that are neither aesthetic nor historical, *thliitsapilthim* are opened up to a different kind of engagement. Extending from their more "traditional" role as ceremonial backdrops, in this scenario they become objects that negotiate the translation of Nuuchaanulth family knowledge to a wider audience. They embody a division between surface and depth; of knowable and unknowable, that has come to define much by way of Indigenous

peoples' relationships with larger Canadian society. In this moment, by offering a surface for public consumption, they protect a depth of private knowledge that remains central in maintaining contemporary indigenous identities (see Townsend-Gault 2004). This act is seemingly one of purposeful deception and central to the continuance of a particular public secret – the understanding that knowledge is partial, controlled and protected.

In knowing this and in being part of the secret, the question becomes: what is left if the task of articulating the unknowable is becoming more and more a redundant effort? If this is no longer the ethical imperative, then what is? As I have tried to show, attention must now be turned to the role of affect and the new possibilities that can be found in accepting in/visibility. In this sense, the unknowable becomes not a hurdle that must be overcome, but a refreshing baseline from which to explore the affective thrust of enchantment or wonder with renewed ethical vigor. One of the many possibilities presented by Backstory is to engage with *thliitsapilthim* not for the purpose of uncovering or exposing their depth, but to play on their surface and feel, for a moment, like we are part of *something*.

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# CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION, AND THE TRANSNATIONAL SUBJECT

ANGELI HUMILDE

## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore issues of governmentality that nation-states have surrounding citizenship during this period of increased mobility and interconnectedness. Using the nation-state of the Philippines as a particular case study, I explore how transnational citizens use their citizenship rights for strategic purposes, but also how the state implements modes of governance using particular laws and policies, in order to encourage their citizens to act in certain ways despite their physical absence from the nation-state and their increased mobility.

## CITIZENSHIP, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The year of 2013 has been riddled with headlines on immigration reforms and citizenship laws not only in Canada, but the United States, and even countries in Europe such as Italy and France. Citizenship typically functions as a marker for one's allegiance to a country and one's identity, as well as belonging to a culture and community. Previously it was believed that culture was fixed within geopolitical boundaries, within a specific space and place; but why is it that culture was viewed as bounded, and equated within a specific space and place? Gupta and Ferguson **(**1992**)** have discussed that in

the past, people have been able to produce logics of difference based on geographical space occupied by a specific group of people in a specific place. It was believed that the culture of people was bounded within the space occupied by a specific people, which has allowed us to produce the categories that divide people into 'us' and 'them' based on perceived differences. The laws of citizenship reinforce these principles, because they dictate who are the 'us' group, and who are 'the others', who belongs to the state and is thus able to claim a certain national identity, and occupy a specific subject position. In light of globalization, and as more and more people live as transnational citizens, this illusion of a natural connection between a place, culture, and identity becomes broken; however, mechanisms still exist in which people produce these categorical differences of 'us' and 'them' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

With the increased mobility of people during this current time due to work and career opportunities pursued abroad, citizenship has taken on a whole new set of meanings in global culture as many people choose to live as transnational citizens. I use this particular term *transnational citizen* to describe the increased mobility of people during this time due to globalization, and how these increased movements of people have changed what it means to be a citizen. People are not merely citizens of one country, but they often hold citizenship cards or residency cards to multiple countries and acquire the benefits of those states along with these cards. Transnational citizens are also never truly sedentary. They may choose to settle in one place for certain periods of time, but they also have the ability to move to different countries based on what opportunities particular states may have to offer. However, they may also go back and forth between their ancestral homelands and their host countries multiple times. Some may choose to work in one state

and maintain a family in another state; some may relocate their immediate family to one place for strategic purposes, but choose to maintain properties, businesses, and social circles in another state. Thus, these people are not only transnational citizens because they transverse through many different states, but they are often in transit from one state to another, as many of them sustain relationships, livelihoods, and families in different parts of the globe.

In the past, the symbol of the passport was typically a symbol of citizenship, allegiance to a state, and membership within a culture; however, due to the reality of certain states with a significant percentage of their population living in diaspora, they have the challenge of maintaining legitimacy in order for that state to justify its geopolitical boundaries. Therefore, states must operate on principles of difference in order for them to legitimize their power, territory, and control over their populations so that sovereignty cannot be imagined independently of the state. This idea behind states, sovereignty, and boundedness of culture, we must remember, are social constructions and depend on repeated performances by the state to legitimize itself (Hansen and Stepputat 2005). The state of India is just one of the many examples of a state which legitimizes its sovereignty based on the social constructions of citizenship. Due to the reality of the increasing mobility of peoples today, reformed citizenship laws by many countries, such as India, now allow for dual-citizenships, or 'origin cards' that function as a type of 'quasi citizenship', in order to make room for its members in diaspora. This new law not only targets these transnational citizens in order to secure remittances, but also to retain the loyalty of these upwardly mobile citizens to 'the old country' (Hansen and Stepputat 2005). States use these citizenship laws to promote sentimental attachments to the motherland, which in turn, allows the state to subjectify

citizens under governmentality. I use the term governmentality in the same way as outlined by Michel Foucault. Governmentality is a way of governing, unlike the powers of a sovereign ruler where power is concentrated into one place in a top-down model, governing through governmentality is about governance through self-surveillance, it was the "conduct of conduct" (Foucault 1982:220-221). This is because for Foucault power was not fixed, it can be used strategically. Governance is an activity and practice, thus power cannot be imposed, because for Foucault power was not fixed, therefore the art of governance must be to establish an upwards and downwards continuity of power. While the sovereign can impose their powers on their people, people have ways of manipulating that power to meet their means. Foucault saw people as active agents; therefore governing through governmentality has more to do with employing tactics to get men to obey the laws, and at the heart of this was this idea of self-governance. Self-governance for Foucault came from good governance from the top, so that those at the bottom may self-govern. According to Foucault, governmentality was "…not of imposing law on men, but of disposing of things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even using laws themselves as tactics- to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means such and such ends may be achieved" (Foucault 1991:95). However, because transnational citizens are members of more than one state, the challenge of these states now becomes being able to get these citizens to identify themselves as members of the state, in order for the state to subjectify those people under their governmentality. However, if people hold multiple citizenship cards, the question becomes, which nation-state do they actually belong to? How is one to govern these multiple passport holders, and maintain allegiance to a state? In order to be *subjectified*- that is become

governed by the governmentality of the state- people must first see themselves as being members of the state; while these subjects may be transnational citizens traversing through many different boundaries, and living in many different states, these people may still be able to recognize that they are members of a particular state. Thus, in recognizing that they are still members of a particular state, the state is able to maintain governance of these people through governmentality.

As more and more people choose to traverse the globe, and move away from their ancestral homelands, the legitimacy of sovereign states is questioned. Thus, citizenship laws come into play which function as a mechanism by the state in order to legitimize their geopolitical boundaries, their governance, and also to maintain control of their transnational population. This paper aims to explore the issues of nation-states during this period of increased interconnectedness and mobility of people during the age of late capitalism, and the mechanisms by states to maintain control of their transnational population, and how certain state policies and laws encourage their citizens to act in ways that benefit the state despite their absence and increased mobility. While this paper aims to explore the connections between nation-states, citizenships, and governmentality, given the time constraints and the vastness of this topic, for the purposes of this paper, we will only be able to explore citizenship in its relation to the Foucauldian notion of subject positions, and the negotiation of these multiple passport holders of the various subject positions they hold. Many of the case studies presented in this paper are ones that come from my own ethnographic field research undertaken in the summer of 2014, in the Philippines, and the preliminary research I conducted attending talks, discussions, and personal conversations I had with people who were

of Filipino ancestry, but have gained citizenship to other nation-states either by birth, marriage or naturalisation in their host country. My understanding of the Philippine culture was also aided from the fact that the Philippines is my ancestral homeland. While I have spent most of my life in Canada, and very much consider myself to be Canadian, I was able to grow up learning about and being exposed to Philippine culture. Therefore, using the Philippines as a case study for this highly politicized topic of citizenship, immigration, and governing transnational subjects, I hope that this will shed some light on the different layers surrounding this topic.

The Philippine state is an example of a nation-state that has employed such tactics of governmentality in a very effective manner within its expatriate community. Although the Philippines has been criticized by the World Bank because of its heavy reliance on its expatriates sending remittances to keep the economy afloat (Teves 2005), remittances play a very large role in Philippine culture. It has been approximated that legal remittances have totaled approximately $20.117 billion annually, although the Asian Bankers Association estimates it to be closer to $128 billion, which is about 13.5% of the country's GDP (Remo 2012). 80% of all these remittances come from seven countries, with Canada being in the top three countries that send remittances (Magtulis 2012). Despite these criticisms by the international community, the Philippine government has praised overseas Filipinos who send remittances, and have dubbed them as 'heroes of the nation' (Fisher 2013). As stated previously, Philippine culture, (and now its government) heavily encourages remittances. Whether it is sending remittances to immediate or extended family, there is a sense of responsibility instilled in the expatriates. While many of them may work low-skilled jobs in their country of permanent residence, in my experience, I have found that there is a

narrative that persists that because they are the ones who were able to 'get out', and are considered more 'fortunate' than those who were 'left back home', the responsibility falls on them when family (of any sort) has fallen on tough times, and therefore they are the ones who are expected to contribute financially.

Many citizenship laws have been reformed, partly due to the fact that the state wishes to encourage its transnational citizens to contribute to the remittance economy. At the same time, these laws are also used by those who are eligible for citizenship as a mechanism of agency, one might even call these actions *strategic reversibility* as per Tania Li (2007). According to Li, the consequences of power can rarely be predicted, and the outcomes of the practice of governmentality can rarely be determined. Thus, strategic reversibility is defined as resistances against governmentality, but not resistance of the entire system altogether; it is resistance in the sense of manipulation of certain rules to the benefit of the subjects being governed. These resistances are not necessarily rebellious in nature, but instead are done for strategic purposes, in the interest of the subjects optimizing the position that they have come to occupy. Passports have typically served as a symbol of citizenship, belonging, solidarity, invoking a sense of camaraderie with others who 'belong' to the same nation. The very document of the passport itself is highly political and symbolic. First of all, they all do not look the same; each passport has a distinct color, lettering, and seal of the country on its cover. Many times while standing in line for the customs or immigration counter at the airport, one cannot help but notice and take note of what passport others hold in their hand, and whenever one notices others who hold a similar passport, there is a feeling or sense of camaraderie with that person, even when they may be a complete stranger. In my

experience as a traveler, many conversations in lines at the airport with strangers have started because they had noticed that we were both holding the same passport. While passports are culturally symbolic, due to the increasing mobility of people, and newly reformed citizenship laws put into place that allow people to hold multiple passports, passports are now collected like memberships to country clubs- and the more passports you hold, the better. This is because holding citizenship rights to a particular nation comes with certain perks such as subsidized post-secondary education, or rights to own land instead of paying land leases.  A number of my classmates in high school, in Canada, who were born, raised, and spent most of their lives in Canada, were also American citizens. Typically, one of their parents was an American citizen, but because they had married a Canadian, they had chosen to migrate here for whatever reason. Through their American parent, some of my classmates were able to gain dual-citizenship status. These people, when asked where they were from if they were travelling in another country, would typically state that they are Canadian. Many of them saw themselves 'belonging' to the nation of Canada, and called it home. On the occasions when they revealed that they held dual-citizenship status and were asked about why they kept their American citizenship, many of my former classmates would explain to others that they kept their American citizenship because should they one day decide to pursue schooling at American schools, they would be able to do so, and not have to pay the exorbitant international student fees, which could go as high as $40,000-$60,000.

The Philippines has recently reformed their citizenship laws, so that those who previously had to give up Philippine citizenship due to 'naturalisation' in their host country can reacquire their lost

Philippine citizenship. Therefore, one is now able to hold dual citizenship, and possess both a Philippine and a Canadian passport for example, at the same time, when it was not possible to do so before. This reform has come under speculation, partly because the Philippines relies so heavily on its expatriate community to send remittances. By presenting Filipinos who live overseas, and have naturalised in their host countries, the opportunity to reacquire their lost Philippine citizenship, the Philippine state creates this connection between their transnational citizens and the homeland. Should they one day need to appeal to these citizens who live abroad, let's say to encourage remittances in order to keep the economy afloat, they may be able to instill a sense of duty into these people as they are legally subjects of the Philippine state due to the citizenship rights they hold.

Remittances do not only come in the form of money wired from relatives abroad, but they also come in the form of investment in the homeland. Most recently, many of the investments made by transnational Philippine citizens have been in Philippine residential and vacation real estate. The recent boom of Philippine real estate due to luxury, residential, enclave, and vacation developments has been credited to Philippine expatriates, who purchase a significant percentage of these properties. Laws in the Philippines stipulate that while foreigners can buy a house in the Philippines, they cannot buy the land on which it stands, and must therefore purchase land leases. Thus, Filipinos who have given up their Philippine citizenship in order to become naturalised in their host countries would have had to pay land leases. However, because of this reform in citizenship laws, Filipinos who live abroad but wish to purchase real estate in the Philippines will no longer have to pay these land leases. Many have speculated that in the best interests of the state, the Philippine

government has reformed its citizenship laws not only to encourage expatriates to return to the home country, and maintain ties with its diasporic population, but also to encourage further remittances from its transnational population in the form of real estate investment. These reformed citizenship laws enable Filipinos living overseas the ability to hold citizenship to multiple countries, and also make purchasing real estate in the Philippines a much smoother process. Due to this reform in citizenship laws, many expatriates have been coaxed to buy these properties because as citizens, they do not have to pay land leases. These properties not only become a vacation home, but an investment at the same time. If the value for these properties increase with time, these luxury homes could be sold for profit, rented out, or used as a permanent home upon retirement. Subsequently, these properties also encourage frequent visits of the expatriates back to the home country, which means an influx of capital from expatriates with foreign currency that is typically worth a lot more (for example, one Canadian Dollar is typically worth 40 Philippine Pesos depending on the daily exchange rate). Therefore, due to the high foreign currency exchange rates, many Filipinos who come back to the Philippines from abroad are enticed to spend their foreign currency, as they are able to get more "bang for their buck" in the Philippines. This influx of Philippine expatriates from abroad coming back to the home country to spend their foreign currencies certainly plays a large role in stimulating the Philippine economy. It is no wonder that many development companies who build these vacation enclaves are offered tax breaks from the Philippine government if they sell their properties to a certain percentage of expatriates (Cardenas 2013). In the case of Philippine expatriates, these citizen law reforms have left room for strategic reversibility for those who are looking for real estate investment. At the same time,

the argument could also be made that these laws were put into place in order to coax its transnational citizens to adhere to the governmentality of the state, and become good citizens through the accumulation of capital abroad and gaining market virility, but subsequently using that capital and investing in the homeland. The implicit message here is that by investing in the homeland as a citizen, you have done your duty to the state by acquiring earnings in your host country, and using it to participate and strengthen the home country's economy. Through capitalist participation, you keep the motherland alive and well by stimulating its economy.

Aihwa Ong's article, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States" (1996), discusses Hong-Kong money elite residents, who reside in exclusive communities in the San Francisco Peninsula mountain range, where homes typically cost over a million dollars. These residents have been nicknamed 'astronauts', as they spend much of their time shuttling back and forth across the Pacific. Due to this high level of mobility, this elite group of residents has been accused of being un-attuned to the cultural norms of the Californian citizens by many of the other long-time residents. The key motivation for many of these Hong-Kong businessmen for relocating their families, especially their children, to California, is so that their children may be able to gain universally certified educational degrees, and eventually green cards for the entire family. By acquiring educational certifications and residence rights, this will eventually enable the entire family to permanently settle in the United States. Ong (1996) borrows from Foucault and dubs these plans, "family biopolitics". The heads of these families make the decision to relocate their members based on the premise that in the future this relocation will pay off as the children will be able to gain

an American education and green cards, thus ensuring the prosperity of the family as a whole, while at the same time, evading the governmentality of the communist home country. While these people may do their best in evading the governmentality of the home country, at the same time the home country also tries to do its best to hold onto its transnational citizens, so that they may still internally recognize their Chinese identity. It is interesting to note that many of these parents still encourage their children to observe some Chinese customs and speak the language- meaning that these children are encouraged to maintain a part of their Chinese identity.

## SUBJECT POSITIONS AND IDENTIFICATION

Previously, the notion of identity was grounded in Cartesian ideology, that is that identity was fixed and could not be shaped or molded. This ideology was grounded in the national conceptions of cultural identity which stipulated that identity was fixed and depended on geographical location. Stuart Hall (1996) critiqued this notion and instead argued that identity is a process. While identity does play a role in the politics of location, identity is not bounded in a place but instead is a process of discursive practices. Michel Foucault on the other hand, discusses the concept of identity in terms of subjectification. Subjectification is a process of people recognizing the roles they occupy within society, and these positions are informed by structures of power, such as the government, the dominant culture, or the state (Rose 1996). Subjects come to occupy these positions rather than others through discourse, knowledge and power relations, which inform these positions and thus allow subjects to recognize the roles in society that they occupy. However, these elite transnational citizens known as 'astronauts'- as mentioned previously- occupy multiple subject positions imposed by the state,

such as the position of the Chinese migrant, the position of the American-educated student, and the position of the Chinese citizen. With all the different positions these people occupy in various different nations, how does the state encourage its transnational citizens to recognize their identity as subjects of the state, moreover how do they recognize which state they belong to, as they occupy positions in so many different ones? How do these different states get them to recognize these positions in order for them to adhere to the governance of the state?

Hall (1996) also discusses Althuser's concept of "hailing". Hailing is a process in which subjects come to recognize themselves as subjects, and thus must adhere to the governmentality of the larger structure of power that informs them of their roles, and thus how they must conduct themselves within society. In the case of the "astronauts", while occupying multiple national subject positions these people must come to recognize the 'hail' of the state. If subjects come to recognize themselves through the concept of "hailing", what is it about this "hail," that allows subjects to come to recognize that they are the ones being called out to, and thus turn to respond? According to Hall (1996) subjects must first internally recognize that they are the ones being called out to, and it is through this recognition of who one is, that the subject comes to turn and respond to the 'hail'. Therefore with the increasing number of people who choose to live as transnational citizens and occupy multiple subject positions, how does the state hail these multiple passport holders into recognizing that they are still subjects of that particular state? How does the state get people to identify as subjects when they do not physically reside in "the motherland"? While the Chinese transnational citizen- the "astronaut" who shuttles back and forth across the Pacific- may reside in California, through their conscious

choice of maintaining their mother tongue and customs of the homeland, they maintain an attachment to a national identity. In doing so, they are able to maintain a Chinese subject position, even if they may reside physically in a different society. Therefore, because a part of them still recognizes their Chinese identity, they will be able to respond to the 'hail' of their ancestral homeland.

Weedon (2004) discusses that identity is temporary, it changes all the time, however subject positions encourage identification, and once a subject identifies with a particular identity, they come to recognize the subject position they occupy within society. Through the maintenance of the Chinese language and customs, these 'astronauts' make the conscious decision to identify with a Chinese identity. Therefore, while they may constantly be in transit from one place to another, the mother state is able to impose some aspects of governmentality, so long as these subjects are making the choice to identify with a particular national identity. By identifying with a specific national identity, subjects are able to recognize internally that they are the subjects and through this recognition they are subjectified by the state. Therefore, they will recognize that they are the ones being 'hailed' by the state and thus, they become subject to the governmentality of the state.

## GOVERNING TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENS

At the same time, the host state must try to find ways to govern and regulate these transnational individuals living in their state. Aihwa Ong (1999) discusses the agency of these transnational subjects, and the attempts of the state to regulate their activities and identities, through these attempts by the host state, people are thrown into multiple subject positions which requires them to cope with the governmentality of the cultural homeland, and the host country.

These "people in transit" are not merely nomadic subjects, but they are subject to governing practices of the host and home state. A strategy of Chinese migrants who are also prominent businessmen in the United States, has been to invest, and give very generous donations to major public institutions, such as universities and museums, in order to ease racial tensions and promote cultural acceptance of the Chinese in America (Ong 1996). In this way, these Asian investors attempt to buy symbolic capital in the West in order to ease the transition for these transnational citizens, which in turn make it easier for these migrants to settle permanently in the host country.

The challenge of many states with its population living in diaspora now becomes this mobile populous; due to pressures of governmentality, and the fact that these people occupy more than one national subject position, these mobile citizens must be able to continuously recognize the 'hail' of the homeland when they are called. Expatriate Filipinos hold passports for at least two countries, a number of these expatriates are constantly in transit, therefore there is a belief that they are not subject to the national subject position imposed by the Philippine or the Canadian state. While many of these subjects appear to occupy these subject positions opportunistically, many of their discourses, and ways of conduct, are still informed by state powers. These people may occupy and identify with multiple subject positions, and certainly these positions may be at certain times strategic, but they are still subject to the governmentality of the state. The strong emphasis on the remittance economy is a heavily emphasized governing principle by the Philippine state, as discussed earlier. The newly reformed laws of Philippine citizenship promote expatriates to keep their ties with the home country, physically (through the ownership of land), and

symbolically (through the privilege of being able to acquire a Philippine passport). This keeps the expatriate population heavily involved and invested in the homeland, and instills a sense of responsibility in these citizens, as these people are legally citizens of the nation. As citizens, they are required to play a part in maintaining the well-being of the nation. Therefore, these laws hold people in these subject positions, as they permanently attach the "expatriate nation" to the home nation (Hansen and Stepputat 2005). This is the challenge of every nation with a population in diaspora, for their exceptionally mobile citizens to recognize, and identify with the motherland.

## SUBJECTIFICATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants have long been discriminated against by members of their host country, and much of the time, the state itself. All over Europe we see immigrants flocking to wealthy Western European countries from their former colonies, and many of these people are regarded as undesirable, threatening strangers (Stolcke 1993). Cultural identity and distinctiveness have previously been associated within a geographical space, this is why 'others' belonging to different cultures and being perceived to have different ways of conduct are regarded as a threat to the country. This is because there is this fear that too much influence from people who are perceived to be different will change the host society in a way that makes them unrecognizable. Stolcke (1993), also discusses how these culturally different foreigners pose a threat because the native population feels threatened when perceived 'intruders' exceed a certain proportion, and this is when people start to become territorial. There is this assumption that foreigners, strangers, and those who are outwardly different from 'us', in terms of belief, culture, and conduct, are not

entitled to share the 'national' resources and wealth, especially when these resources become scarce. It is this underlying dogma of 'protecting the nation', that promotes legislation which dictates who can become citizens of a nation and who cannot. These laws create categories of 'us' and 'them', which in turn creates the subject position of the unwanted immigrant, and the coveted position of the desirable citizen- and this is when race comes into play. In order to 'protect the nation', narratives surrounding race which operate on outward difference as a way to differentiate between the groups who are deemed to be the desired citizens, the acceptable immigrants, and the unwanted foreigners. In the attempts to ease these racial narratives and create cultural acceptance, immigrants try to gain cultural capital. The success of these racialized 'others' hinges on gaining this capital and assimilating into the dominant culture. The accumulation of cultural capital thus forms a hierarchy; labels of groups which are deemed to be the 'acceptable others', is based on how much cultural capital a particular racial group has gained, and in turn, it determines which immigrants have an easier time assimilating into the host society. For example, Asians have often been called, "the model minority", in America because of their high educational achievement, increased presence in white-collar jobs, lower arrest rates, and high family stability (Kramer 2003). This ideology leads to the "whitening" and "blackening" of racial others according to Ong (1996). This white-black continuum is based on previous ideas of white supremacy; immigrants who are perceived to cause trouble in society, are labeled as 'difficult immigrants', therefore they are deemed undesirable, and are seen as closer to the black pole, thus they are put at the bottom of the cultural and economic ranking. Those immigrants who are deemed to be 'model minorities' on the other hand, are deemed to be closer to the white

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pole, thus these groups become privileged almost to the same degree as the citizens of the state.

The principle here becomes that if you act according to the rules dictated by the state of what it means to be a 'good citizen', and succeed economically according to these principles, the host society will be more inclined to accept you, even if you are an outsider. The Philippines have been an ally of the United States since World War II when soldiers from both nations fought alongside one another against Japanese occupation of the Philippines. The United States has maintained naval bases in the Philippines ever since, and while many of these bases are now closed both countries maintain close relations. The Philippines has now become Canada's leading source of immigrants, and they have gone as far as crediting the United States as being the ones responsible for this successful assimilation to the country because to this day, Filipinos are taught English in schools due to the historically strong American presence in the Philippines. It is because they are taught English from such a young age that they are able to settle in English-speaking countries such as Canada and assimilate (Friesen 2011). Due to the maintained amicable relationship of the Philippines with the United States, Filipino World War II veterans who have settled in the United States are now being granted fast track American citizenship, along with any immediate members of their families. This is only one of the perks that veterans are being given due to the close relations the two countries have maintained over the decades. It is interesting to note however, that this reform on the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act has only been passed in 2013. Initially, the United States offered Filipino soldiers full veteran benefits, and the promise of becoming 'naturalized' American citizens if they enlisted, along with their families, back in World War II. Many men enlisted based

on this opportunity to secure American citizenship for themselves and their families, however once the war ended the benefits were rescinded, and those who emigrated to the United States from the Philippines were considered to be 'illegal'. It was only because these former soldiers were granted amnesty by the American government, for their service to the United States that they were allowed to stay in the country (Cuevas 2013). This unfulfilled promise is why many veterans have fought so hard, for many decades, for this reform. It goes to show however, that due to the maintenance of a close, amicable relationship, and with Filipinos being one of the perceived 'model minorities' of society, these legal reforms have come to pass in the American government. What if this were the case for any of the perceived 'difficult immigrants'? If any of these groups, who are perceived to be difficult and a drain on the system, tried to call for such reforms for fast-tracked citizenship, for any reason, the result may not be the same.

In order for immigrants to gain the right to become citizens of a state, along with the benefits that come with being a citizen, they must become culturally "the same". As Stolcke discusses,

> "By building [a] case for the exclusion of immigrants on a trait shared by all humans alike rather than an unfitness allegedly intrinsic to extracommunitarians, cultural fundamentalism, by contrast with racist theories, has a certain openness which leaves room for requiring immigrants, if they wish to live in our midst, to assimilate culturally… At the core of this ideology of collective exclusion predicated on the idea of the "other" as a foreigner, a stranger, to the body politic is the assumption that formal political equality presupposes cultural identity and hence cultural sameness is the essential prerequisite for access to citizenship rights" (Stolcke 1995:8)

This creates a hierarchy, however, for those who are more similar in culture, and those who have an easier time assimilating versus those groups who are perceived to be troublesome, therefore these groups became exceptionally racialized by the state because they are "difficult", and a perceived drain on the system. Hence these groups become "unwanted". The process of states dictating rules of assimilation creates a categorical hierarchy, and puts people into certain subject positions that they may or may not necessarily want to occupy. The position of the "unwanted" immigrant for example, is dictated by the generalizations that the host state may have already created based on previous experiences, or exceptional cases that may have arisen with those other members of a particular culture in the past. These generalizations may lead to future acts of discrimination, and may subject certain immigrant groups to marginalized positions in society. These acts can alienate such members of society, which makes it harder for these people to assimilate and become accepted, thus keeping them in these marginalized positions. On the other hand, some immigrant groups are privileged in the sense that they are accepted by the larger host society with ease, and are thus granted certain rights, such as fast-track citizenship. With the privilege of being "model immigrants", many of these groups are not scrutinized for keeping ties and the customs of the motherland. On the other side of this issue, despite the fact that these people are deemed to be naturalized citizens, the host state also has the challenge of regulating the activities and identities of these subjects (Ong 1999). The strong transnational movement in this era, allows many of these naturalized citizens the flexibility of migration and relocation, and therefore many of these people have the option of using their subjectivities in ways that optimize the positions they occupy. At the same time, it is also a challenge of the motherland to

be able to "hail" their subjects, and for their subject to recognize the "hail", meaning that they still identify with the motherland, and thus the motherland is able to mobilize their transnational citizens living abroad should they need them.

As more and more people in the world have the opportunity to become increasingly mobile, many people from different cultural backgrounds will come into contact and influence one another. We see this in many places now, one only has to look around the nearest city, and already you can see how the peoples from different nations have converged, and have influenced everything from the cuisine, to the architecture of houses, and even the layout of the different neighborhoods. Due to all the presence of these people from very different backgrounds, laws have been put into place, which allow people to hold multiple citizenships. The challenge of the states which these people originally come from, will be to hold their subjects in their national subjectivities, and maintain relations with them, so that the subjects recognize that they are inherently still Canadian, Filipino, Chinese or whatever other states they hold allegiance to. In maintaining these relations, should they ever need to use their transnational citizens for any purpose, the option to mobilize these people for whatever purpose the state needs to use them for will be there. It is also the challenge of these people who hold citizenship to multiple nations, to cope with the pressures of the host-countries, and the pressures of the cultural homeland (Ong 1999), while at the same time negotiating their different subject positions, and coming to terms with the different identities they choose to hold on to. Identity, according to Weedon is a "limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one is" (2004:19). In times of increased mobility and transnational citizens with flexible

citizenship, it will be interesting to see how these subjects use their agency, and how they apply certain mechanisms to juggle these multiple identities, and negotiate the different subject positions that they occupy.

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# STRESS AND THE 'NAVIGATION OF MULTIPLE WORLDS': EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN VICTORIA

SARAH FLETCHER

ABSTRACT

Moving beyond the negative conceptualizations of stress and acculturative stress that dominate the literature, this paper will draw on interview and photovoice material from the Navigating Multiple Worlds project to explore stress as a narrative idiom, looking at the meanings of 'stress,' the many ways that stress can be experienced and how it can influence the ways of being in the world for immigrant youth. Rather than looking at stress as something that can be quantitatively measured, our analysis revealed that youth were talking about stress in a number of ways. This paper presents examples of stress discussed in terms of physical reactions and bodily experiences, the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress, and the importance of 'everyday stresses' in the lives of immigrant youth. Our participatory process, mixed methods design and focus on youth voices allowed us to explore stress as a narrative idiom, and ultimately its use as an idiom of resilience as well as distress. The potential for future research, taking an ethnographic approach to the study of stress, as a narrative tool, is highlighted.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## BACKGROUND

Several years ago, as I was thinking about which direction to take with my dissertation research, I spoke with youth workers at the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) who identified 'stress' as a frequent topic of discussion among their youth clientele. They suggested that stress and immigrant youth was an area that demanded further research.

Immigrant youth in Victoria face uncertainty in many aspects of their lives. Most have little control over their family's decision to immigrate and once they arrive, many face challenges as they navigate multiple expectations from family, school and friends. Although all youth may experience varying levels of stress, it is reasonable to suggest that immigrant youth may experience additional forms of stress as they work to renegotiate their place in their new host communities and in their relocated families.

The Navigating Multiple Worlds (NMW) project was carried out in partnership with the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). Working with a group of immigrant youth researchers, the NMW project was developed to explore the relationship between stress, resilience and expressions of subjectivity among immigrant youth.

## METHODS

The project began with a 2-day research methods training workshop in Victoria, open to anyone between the ages of 13 and 30 that identified as an immigrant youth. The workshop participants included first and second generation immigrant youth from Brazil, Iraq, Korea, China, the Philippines, Columbia, Egypt, Bermuda, Chile and Guatemala. At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to join the team as paid research assistants, working to develop and carry out a participatory research endeavor focused on stress and documenting experiences of immigrant youth.

The design of our research process derived from community-based and participatory action research paradigms (Hemment 2007; Israel 2005). It was important to me that this research be action-oriented and as participatory as possible (Israel et al. 1998). As the research facilitator, I coordinated meetings and provided training, as well as participated in group discussions and analysis. I also carried out a secondary analysis of the interview and photovoice material that was focused specifically on stress in the context of immigrant youth experiences.

Our research process was a collaborative effort. After an introduction to research methods was provided through the workshop, six immigrant youth formed the core research team. This team developed research questions and determined the design of our

project. They decided first to carry out a series of interviews with other immigrant youth, followed by a series of focus groups to confirm the themes that emerged from the interviews. Finally, they conducted a photovoice project to gather youth perspectives on immigration and stress in a way that could be shared with a wider audience.

Photovoice uses participant-driven documentary photography to explore community issues, allowing people to "identify, represent and enhance their community, with the goals of recording and reflecting people's personal outlook on their community" (Wang 1999:185). As part of the training workshops, the youth researchers were introduced to photovoice as a research method (Wang 1999). In recognition of the fact that English was a second language for most of our participants and research team members, the team felt strongly that arts-based methods, and photovoice in particular, was an accessible way to present and reflect on youth perspectives. In preparation for the photovoice phase of the research, a second training workshop was held, focusing on photography and ethics. After this workshop, the research team was joined by an additional five youth for the photovoice portion of the project.

The research team met on a weekly basis to develop our research processes to build capacity in research methods and skills (such as focus group facilitation and interviewing), to analyze data, and to develop resources to address issues identified throughout the research. Once the interviews and focus groups were completed, the research team worked collaboratively to develop nine themes or questions for the photovoice portion of our project. These themes included: "Navigating Multiple Worlds" (what that means to you); Who you are/ your self portrait; "Home"; The biggest challenge you

faced since coming to Victoria; What you are most proud of since coming to Victoria; What 'stress' means to you; What 'belonging' means to you; Something that makes your life easier/ something that represents support for you; and, Transformation and progress… your imagined future.

Rather than looking at stress as something that can be quantitatively measured, our analysis revealed that youth were talking about stress in a number of ways. Our participatory process, mixed methods design and focus on youth voices allowed us to explore stress as a narrative idiom, and ultimately its use as an idiom of resilience as well as distress.

## STRESS AND IMMIGRANT YOUTH

Korovkin and Stephenson (2010) describe stress as a "grand concept" and as "the key term in the master narrative of our times" (xxii). The introduction of the term 'stress' by W.B Cannon in the 1920s was followed by the publication of Seyle's seminal work on stress in the 1950s. This led to a boom in stress research (Obrist and Buchi 2008). Stress has emerged as a normalized way for people to express aspects of distress or tension in their lives (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010; Obrist and Buchi 2008), and it has become a dominant explanatory framework for various forms of experiences of distress around the world (Korovkin and Stephenson 2010). The widespread prevalence of 'stress' and use of 'stress terminology' may be a response to what Sennet calls "the fundamental need for conceptual, cognitive, symbolic tools for reorienting and reconstituting the self" (Ortner 2005:44) in the face of the heightened pace of social and cultural change, innovation, and knowledge exchange in the world today.

Although all youth may experience varying levels of stress, research has identified that immigrant youth may experience additional forms of stress as they become accustomed to their new communities. While immigrant adults sometimes have the option of choosing marginalization, or remaining on the edges of their host culture (Pumariega et al. 2005), these options are often not available to immigrant children and youth as they are required to go to school and to learn and speak a new language. As a result, youth can be forced to negotiate between 'multiple worlds.' Youth are often encouraged by their families to remain loyal to their ethnic enclave, with departure viewed as betrayal. At the same time, those same families may be pressuring youth to succeed academically, as parents place emphasis on the sacrifices they have made to ensure the success of the next generation (Horton 2008). Meanwhile, youth are also looking to make friends in their new communities (Costigan et al.2010; Pumariega et al.2005; Wolf 1997).

The language of stress has emerged as an accessible way for immigrant youth to frame their negotiation of the multiple expectations they can face in their new communities. For many youth, stress functions as an idiom of distress. Idioms of distress are defined as "socially and culturally resonant means of experiencing and expressing distress in local worlds… They can communicate experiential states, on a trajectory from mildly stressful to the depths of suffering" (Nichter, 2010: 405). Idioms of distress respond to the need to analyze manifestations of distress in the context of personal and cultural meaning complexes (Nichter, 1981). Over the course of the NMW project, 'stress' was discussed by youth in relation to their experiences with the process of immigration and adjusting to a new community. Stress was also associated with negotiating the often-competing expectations of family, friends, and teachers, of finding

employment or of advancing education. The multitude of changes in support networks, socioeconomic status and daily life that can accompany immigration added to experiences of stress. Although the youth interviewed had varied experiences with immigration to Victoria, three overarching themes in terms of the way they talked about stress emerged over the course of our research processes. The following sections will illustrate the polyvalence of 'stress' in the lives of immigrant youth, with examples taken from the interview and photovoice materials that emphasize the physicality of stress, the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress, and the centrality of 'daily stressors' in the lives of youth.

## THE PHYSICALITY OF STRESS

> What is stress for me? … A headache…(laughing)… yeah I say it's a headache because it is something that is there that is bugging me because it is there and it feels like a pain, and sometimes it is hard because I feel it and I know that I want to slow down and relax a little bit, but then it just keeps on letting it happen and the amount of it piles up and then a small thing, I make it a huge thing and that is part of my stress… yeah and worrying too much, that is kind of what helps my stress level increase too much, you know small things, big things, things that are maybe not even there, and I am stressing out about it which is not good.
>
> – Marianna, 30, Brazil

Marianna, a first generation immigrant from Brazil, was one of the older participants in the NMW project. She balances a full time job with being a single mother, and in her interview, focused largely on embodied experiences of stress, tying them back to social

and financial pressures and the need to manage multiple aspects of her life and responsibilities.  Her description of stress resonates with the experiences of many of the youth who participated in our research. Many individuals discussed stress in physical terms, as 'pressure' or medicalized experiences: using disease-based terminology or talking about stress in terms of pain manifested in the body.

The body provides a rich backdrop from which to draw metaphorical explanations of stress. For many youth, physical experiences of stress were the most easily discussed, regardless of their level of English.  One participant, a Filipino first generation immigrant, studying to be a nurse, drew frequently on biomedically oriented body metaphors, describing stress as "like cancer to me." She describes stress as something that is constant and persistent, almost an integral part of her life – "something that is always there that I can't get rid of and can't live without."  She also described stress as a metaphorical 'blockage' in the body:

> Stress for me is kinda like… it's like… for example, you're a vein in your body and then you have a fat, and then that fat is the stress and it blocks the blood. Something like that…So stress for me is kinda like the bondage or the hindrance in my plans… Something that interferes with something that's really good and… stress for me, I experience it, well… especially each and every day I experience it.
>
> – Julia, 18, Philippines

This same participant also struggled with her weight and tied her body and her desire to achieve a more conforming body directly to stress. Her image of 'stress' was a measuring tape.

Personally, I can handle a bunch of stress like school, work and opportunity. However, being physically fit is my Achilles heel. Throughout my childhood, I have been called "fat", "pig", "whale" and other things that describes being physically big. I guess I got accustomed to it that I didn't mind whether I'm going to get skinny or not. However, as I get older, I realize that society will always be the boss of vanity. So right now, I am doing my best to be physically active but in an emotional state, it's like stabbing me with a knife while others cheer for me.

– Julia, 18, Philippines

The emotional and physical aspects of stress were often closely intertwined in youth narratives. Discussions of stress, however, often moved beyond physical, bodily reactions to tension or adverse events. Particularly in the context of the process of

immigration, references to the spatial and temporal dimensions of stress emerged as another central theme.

## SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS OF STRESS

The image below was captured by Paulina to depict stress. Her caption, and the introductory quotation she borrowed from Eckhart Tolle elegantly presents an aspect of the temporal dimensions of stress that can confront youth after immigration. Nostalgia for the past and concern about the future, tied into a desire to meet expectations, to fulfill one's potential and make the sacrifices that often accompany the process of immigration 'worth it,' can leave people with little time to engage with the present. The stories told by many participants give a sense of operating in a reactive temporal framework, struggling to get through daily challenges, and confronting stress as it emerges. This image also demonstrates the relational dimension of stress, with some youth internalizing the stress felt by their families and particularly the stress that their parents may be dealing with.

"Unease, anxiety, tension, stress, worry — all forms of fear — are caused by too much future, and not enough presence. Guilt, regret, resentment, grievances, sadness, bitterness, and all forms of non-forgiveness are caused by too much past, and not enough presence."

– Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

My dad and I share the same life path number: 3. We also happen to share many of the same self-inflicted burdens in our lives. Either we're nostalgically mulling the past or anxiously anticipating the future, but never fully living in the present. Our respective experiences in Victoria have been both stressful and challenging; a certain black hole of sorts. Of course, the grass is always greener on the other side, so that's where my dad is planning on going next.

– Paulina, 27, Bermuda/Poland/Canada

Immigration can also be construed as a disruption in time and space. Psychological and developmentalist research often focuses on the role of trauma and disruption in relation to identity that the process of immigration can cause in the lives of youth (Erickson 1968; Bhugra 2004; Hoerder et al. 2006; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001).  In contrast, many youth interpreted their immigration experiences not as a temporal disruption or break but as part of an ongoing process through time. With an introductory quote from Adam Gopnik, Paulina describes Ella, a first generation immigrant who reflected on the meaning of the process of immigration.

There is the feeling of being apart and the feeling of being a universe apart - the immigrant's strange knowledge that the language and lore that carry on in your own living space are so unlike the ones right outside.

– Adam Gopnik

Ella is biracial, born in Ukraine to a Ukrainian mother and Somalian father, with her childhood spent in Somalia. On top of that, she is both an immigrant and a refugee. That's a lot of things to be. To me, navigating multiple worlds can best be defined by something that Ella had to say on the topic of being an immigrant that really resonated with me. She described immigration as a process; something that doesn't have a defined beginning and ending. Rather, immigration is an ongoing transition; a never-ending process of adaptation, much like the idea of navigating multiple worlds.

– Paulina, 27 Bermuda/Poland/Canada

The perception of immigration as a process that occurs over time, or as more of a gradual process, is also reflected in the discussions of many youth with regards to how they identify themselves. Many youth saw their identity, particularly their ethnicity, as influenced by the passage of time and time since immigration. They also explained how their ideas about identity were also sometimes influenced by social context (who they are with and where they are in particular moments in time) as well as individual experiences.

But right now I'm definitely Chinese, totally, 100% a Chinese, but I have no idea about the future. Maybe in a couple years I will be 50% Canadian, 50% Chinese, but,

you know, when time goes by maybe I will feel: 'oh I'm more a Canadian!' Maybe later, you know, I will see… if everything goes well I'll build my family, I think, probably I will feel more Canadian, but if you know things don't work really well in Canada maybe I would move back to China or another place… Well I don't know, I don't really know.

– Ken, 25 China

 I'm a Filipino. Maybe a Filipino-Canadian in a few months from now, but for now, just Filipino.

– Jonathan, 16 Philippines

Youth descriptions of sacrifices made by their families to immigrate can also include another temporal dimension of stress, with the recognition that they are going backwards, or 're-starting from 0' when they leave their lives behind to immigrate. However, the idea of starting over, stopping time, or starting from 0, despite being recognized as a challenge, was not always seen only in negative terms. Participants described excitement related to the prospect of immigrating, or discussed their attempts to frame things positively in the face of major changes.

It was challenging cause all the idea to start from 0 and find new friends and not being able to be with your grandparents and the rest of your family. So it was hard I guess. It was stressful, it was hard. And like talking English at the beginning I was like super shy, and that was a big challenge and also like talking to people and then getting a job that was a challenge too, cause I was too scared to get a job…. I was just like, I was saying to myself that I was in a better place, like that I can be

someone in this place, like start over. I was, I was far from… it took a while like, accepting that you're not going to see your friends in a while and yeah, it was tough.

<div align="right">– Julio, 18 Guatemala</div>

Many of the youth interviewed in the project had little power or input into their families' decision to immigrate. For some immigration was a time of great uncertainty and they described the continuation of this same uncertainty immediately after immigration.

Um, I don't know about my parents but I definitely did no research into Canada. I didn't know what things would look like, what people would be like, I didn't speak the language, I didn't know what kind of opportunities I would have here, so I wasn't mentally prepared to arrive here. I just kind of came and everything was a big shock… Everything unknown. It was like going to a brand new world.

<div align="right">– Chris, 24, China</div>

This idea of a brand new world, seeing immigration as a both a disruption in space and time and as a new beginning, was also reflected in the experiences of many youth. They spoke of positive as well as negative outcomes of immigration and chose not to dwell on the 'trauma' of immigration that so often emerges as a focus in the literature (Suarez-Orozco 2000). Instead, the research team and many of the youth interviewed emphasized their desire to focus not only on the negative, but also the positive aspects of immigration, implying a desire to explore the power and agency of immigrant youth.

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, and in the photovoice images, many youth agentively moved from focusing on the bigger sources of stress in their lives – expectations from family, peers and school, the trauma of disruption in space and time due to the process of immigration – to smaller things, such as the daily stressors that many youth felt impacted their lives and that they felt required more attention.

## "SOMETIMES IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS": EVERYDAY STRESSORS
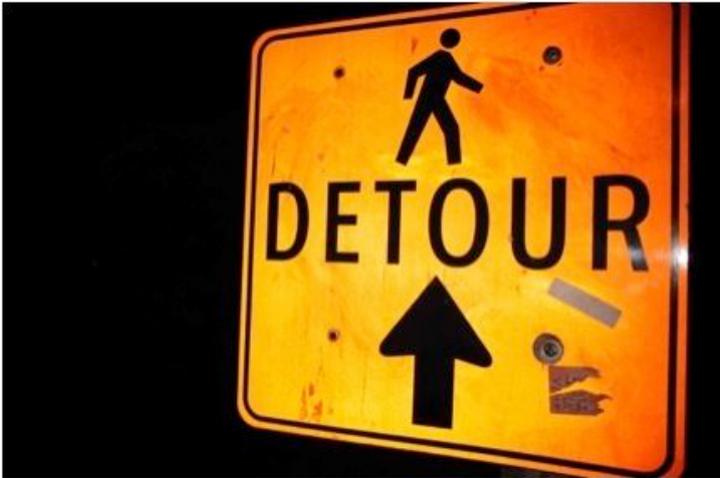


> Like challenges, stress is just a small detour in our daily routine.
>
> – Isabela, 18, Brazil

Growing up in a particular place, a person knows how to be in the world, what norms are to be followed, and where they can push the envelope to express themselves, all structured by

knowledge of the familiar. Much of the literature emphasizes the bigger picture losses and trauma that can accompany immigration. In her work on immigrant youth, school transitions, and negative social mirroring (as youth begin to believe and embody the negative stereotypes they encounter) Suarez-Orozco (2000) goes so far as to title a chapter as 'identities under siege.' However, it became apparent over the course of this research that when the familiar no longer existed, many immigrant youth perceived that it was the little things, rather than the bigger picture 'challenges of immigration' that structured the ways in which they experienced stress in their daily lives.

While many youth did experience difficult transitions (exacerbated by separation from family and sources of support, language difficulties, and challenges making friends or fitting in to their new environments), overwhelmingly, discussions of 'stress' were matched with or framed by discussions of resilience. As our research progressed it became evident that many participants were using their narratives of stress and stressful experiences to reflect on the changes in their lives, their strength in the face of challenges and their pride in how far they had come. Rather than traumatic experiences, so often emphasized in the literature, the youth research team found that really it was "the simple, menial, everyday things that can be what cause some of the most stress for people…" (Research Team Reflections, March 2012). Simple things, like taking the bus and navigating new school environments surfaced a number of times in the interviews or became the subject of the photovoice work.

For youth who arrived in Victoria when they were school-aged, many of the daily stressors they focused on were related to

getting around school, and navigating the system without getting lost.



High school was a really big challenge for me. Making friends and just getting through it was hard. This is a picture of where I went to high school.

– Estuardo, 20 Canada/Guatemala/Chile

The level of excitement in my body to go to school everyday was somewhere around -1 and 0, I was surrounded by people and yet I was always lonely. It was an interesting experience, where by the end you can only be grateful for the people who saw and helped you, or for the ones that made it just a little harder and made you just a bit stronger.

– Isabela, 18, Brazil

Over the course of our analysis, several gaps in supports available for youth in schools emerged. Many of the youth recounted struggling with school schedules. May described her first week of school after arriving in Victoria from the Philippines:

> I didn't notice that each and every day the course changes from A block to B block and then next day, it's B block and A block. And nobody supported me on that…. [And finally I asked the teacher] And then he said, oh! You're in the other classroom. What grade are you in? And I said, I think I'm in grade ten. … And it was in the middle of a class…. I looked so confused and everybody just – one of them is kind of like laughing at me. Probably they think that I'm so stupid I can't even figure out some things.
>
> – May, 18, Philippines

Many of these school related challenges can be attributed to the deficit of translated resources to support youth working to understand their school agendas. Indeed, this is something we worked to remedy through the creation of translated 'guides to the school agenda' in collaboration with an ESL class at a local high school. The repeated highlighting of everyday stressors as opposed to the more common focus on extreme transitions, cultural dissonance and traumatic experiences (Suarez-Orozco 2000; Kilbride et al. 2003), may have been facilitated by the design of our project. With immigrant youth interviewing other immigrant youth, a sense of shared experiences emerged. Less attention needed to be paid to the challenges of the process of immigration and the capital S sources of stress. Common experiences allowed the youth to focus on the things that influenced their everyday lives, labeled by the research team as 'the daily stresses'.

Focusing on everyday stressors also provided an accessible starting point from which youth participants and the research team were able to discuss the challenges they face. The purposive ambiguity of stress plays an important role here. In focusing on daily stressors (exams, getting around, etc.), youth may also be normalizing the challenging experiences that can accompany immigration (learning a new language, changes in family dynamics, family separation or changes in socio-economic status), allowing them to 'fit in' or at least discuss shared experiences of stress with their friends.

One of the youth researchers summarized our findings as follows:

> We are finding out that even though we all come from different places, with different cultures and languages, we all face the same obstacles and we all go through the same challenges. What is stressful for us is dealing with homework, tests and quizzes, but also learning how to live in a different circumstance, most times without people that were always by our side. So stress developed a whole new meaning for us, and that's what we have in common, that's how we are bound.
>
> – Research Team Reflections, March 2012

Above all, this focus on the 'little things' may be the result of functionality. The 'little things' are also the things that there may be potential to address, to take action on. Many youth have no control over their family's decision to immigrate, but after arrival, these 'daily stressors' are the things they might be able to exert some form of control or power over. While learning how to navigate the city and get around on the bus was frequently discussed as a key

source of stress, after asking youth to reflect on their experiences, these activities often also emerged as an area of progress and pride. This was also true of learning English and of figuring out how to navigate the school system, and becoming more familiar with their new communities.

## STRESS AND RESILIENCE: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Labeling something as 'stress' or 'stressful' can normalize negative experiences to a certain extent, providing individuals with an explanatory framework that research suggests is becoming increasingly universal (Obrist and Buchi 2008; Korovkin and Stephenson 2010). Rather than focusing on the negative potential of stress in the lives of immigrant youth, our research suggests that as a result of the flexible, dynamic ways that immigrant youth work with ideas of stress and identity to address the challenges they face, discussions of stress can become a way to reflect on their own resilience. Stress was first described as an 'idiom for resilience' by Obrist and Bucchi (2008) in their work on the meanings given to health and wellness by sub-Saharan Africans in Switzerland. Over the course of the Navigating Multiple Worlds project, we found that the youth involved in our research were also engaging with stress in this way. The polyvalence of stress language allowed youth to discuss their challenges but also to frame experiences of stress in positive terms to facilitate coping and ultimately to enhance resilience.

Mirroring the findings presented by Obrist and Bucchi (2008) which related to immigrant adults, our research demonstrated how, in using stress language, immigrant youth were also able to use the language of stress to move beyond the challenges they face and

to emphasize instead the ways they cope with stress. Viewing stress as an idiom of resilience (Obrist and Bucchi, 2008) as well as an idiom of distress (Nichter 1981, 2010) recognizes and validates the experiences and perspectives of the immigrant youth who participated in our research.

Significant constraints are placed on the lives of immigrant youth. Most described having very little input into the decision to immigrate, and many recounted having to navigate webs of obligation and expectation from parents, friends and school after they arrived in Victoria. However, throughout the project the research team's desire to emphasize the positive as well as the challenging aspects of immigration and the repeated framing of stress as an idiom of resilience in the narratives of immigrant youth suggests, as emphasized by Bucholtz and Skapouli (2009):

> Young people are not simply victims or cogs of these processes. Rather, they are social and cultural agents, who despite very real limitations, manage to accomplish their most immediate goals... to position themselves as particular kinds of youth and thereby to produce new cultural practices. (p.11)

It is worth noting that the immigrant youth involved in our project were, for the most part, a 'particular kind' of immigrant youth. With one exception, they came from immigrant families, rather than refugee families, that actively chose to settle in Victoria. In order to access services from VIRCS, immigrants must be permanent residents or citizens and as such most of the youth in our project came from families that were fairly settled. There is less of a 'transient' immigrant population in Victoria than what is found in larger urban centres. Many of the youth involved had also been

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previously engaged with other programs offered by VIRCS and as such, were accustomed to actively positioning themselves as 'immigrant' youth to access programs and services. Many of these youth had also previously participated in workshops and activities at VIRCS focused on ideas of 'home' and 'belonging' which may have influenced the ways they chose to discuss experiences of stress. As such, recruiting our participants primarily from VIRCS may have contributed to the thematic agreement that emerged from our data analysis in terms of the three ways that stress was described – in terms of physicality and the body, spatial and temporal dimensions and everyday stressors.

The size of Victoria and the relatively small size of its immigrant population also influenced our findings. It is likely that if similar research were carried out in a larger urban centre, individuals may focus more on their experiences as immigrants from particular places and cultural contexts, rather than drawing on shared experiences of immigration and stress. It is also likely that in urban centres with larger refugee populations, narratives of stress could include more focus on past events that would be considered traumatic. However, during the photovoice exhibit that we held to showcase the photovoice work and to share our findings and in presentations across Canada, many members of the public (immigrant and non-immigrant) identified with various aspects of our work, suggesting our findings also speak to a broader audience.

While our process and findings are community based, and specific to a particular group of immigrant youth in Victoria, there is much that can be drawn from the NMW research that may be relevant to other communities. There is value in including youth perspectives in research related to stress and immigrant experiences. Also, considering stress as a narrative tool, rather than a quantifiable

or measureable type of "pressure," creates a productive space for anthropology to consider stress in relation to experiences of resilience as well as distress.  As 'stress' becomes an increasingly universal way for individuals and communities to frame and cope with challenges, further research and taking an ethnographic approach to the exploration of stress as a narrative idiom could be carried out with immigrant or refugee youth in different settings to determine how experiences and use of stress terminology may differ and where there may be similarities.

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# LOADED QUESTIONS: THE PERFORMANCE AND CREATION OF QUEER IDENTITIES

## DAI DAVIES

## ABSTRACT

Due to the contributions of feminist studies to anthropology, performance and performativity have become significant in the understanding of identity. Using these concepts, I examine the social construction of queer identities in a queer space through the utilization of gendered symbolic actions. The data that form the basis of this article were generated during my participation in a queer games night. The topics that the game posed elicited a variety of identity performances that originated from activities such as identity policing, camp talk, and 'gayspeak.' I demonstrate that these activities, in this particular context, work to continually construct, modify, and reinforce the gender identities and sexualities of participants.

## LOADED QUESTIONS: THE PERFORMANCE AND CREATION OF QUEER IDENTITIES

> Unlike inculcated heterosexuality, whose practices and values flood everyday life with an allegory of socially naturalised symbols, to be homosexual does not mean—

exclusively— to like the same sex, to be homosexual means to construct yourself, to realise your inner self[1]

(Moreno 2010:31).

The question of identity is one that fascinates people globally. How one realizes their identities is a topic discussed in many contexts, from everyday speech to non-scholarly works to academic works. Similar to Daniel Moreno's autobiographically-motivated theory of homosexual identity as stated above, Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (2009[1949]:283), proposes that identities are not derived from innate qualities but rather develop from various social processes. Extending these theories to encompass all gender identities, rather than solely those of minority populations, Butler states that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 1990:25). With Judith Butler's (1990) text *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, performance and performativity became an important component of the understanding of gender.

Gender is a social construction that is constantly created and reaffirmed through our actions and speech. Also, through policing these actions and speech, gender roles and identities are reinforced and constructed. Given that we are continuously engaged in the construction of our identities, it is possible to look at any

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[1] The above quotation was written by Ecuador's first drag queen, Daniel Moreno, who, in his book, also states that his text "is not the academic study of anthropologists, they are lines written with life and of our everyday; about being Ecuadorian and nothing more" (2010:20). "A diferencia de la heterosexualidad inculcada, cuyas prácticas y valores inundan la cotidianidad con una alegoría de símbolos naturalizados socialmente, ser homosexual no significa – exclusivamente- gustar del mismo sexo, ser homosexual significa construirse, llegar a serlo."

conversation for identity performance. In this essay, I will examine how queer individuals use gender in a queer space to create queer identities through the use of identity policing, humour, and 'gayspeak.' To analyze the ethnographic data it is essential to understand both the context of the conversations and the theories of gender, performance, and performativity that originate from feminist studies.

I recorded the conversations during a games night in a classroom at Saint Mary's University in 2013 that was hosted by the Saint Mary's University Queer Society. As the game was the main impetus for the conversations, I had little control of the topics and themes of the conversation other than what I contributed to the group conversation. The board game that we played during the night was called "Loaded Questions." The premise of the game is to accumulate points by correctly guessing which player gave which answer to the questions provided by the game. The majority of the topics discussed during the conversation were prompted by the types of questions asked for the purposes of the game. As a result, although the event was targeted towards queer individuals, the topics proposed by the game assumed the players to be heterosexual. However, the discussion and performance of queer identities developed from the active reinterpretation of the questions to fit the realities of the lives of the participants. The conversational format of the situation facilitated a more naturally-flowing presentation of topics and ideas and demonstrates the use of performance as a tool used in everyday speech.

Six speakers participated in the conversation that I recorded. Verbal consent was given by all participants and, as the research was intended as a class assignment, it was approved by my professor, Dr. Eric Henry, and the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board.

As this essay will focus on the construction of identity, it is clearly important to characterize the sexualities and sexes of the speakers. Tracy[2] identified as a lesbian woman, Erin and Laura as bisexual women, Amy as a woman who is possibly bisexual (addressed later in this paper), Ceri and I as gay men, and John as a heterosexual man. Tracy, Amy, Ceri, and I were the main players of the game and read and answered the questions. Erin, John, and Laura alternated in reading the answers provided by the other players of the game. The group was arranged along a table, along one side sat Tracy, John, Laura, and I, and on the other side sat Ceri, Erin, and Amy. Also, Tracy, Laura, Erin, and Amy had known each other for many years prior to this event, and were also all friends of John. Ceri and I had been acquaintances for a few months and this was one of the first times we had conversed at length with the others. Another group was present at the event; however, they did not often participate in this conversation, as they were playing a separate game.

The focus on the performance of gender originates from the gender studies and feminist theories of language use. While hegemonic gender roles have been widely understood by the public as natural or derived from human biology, scholars have begun to examine it as a process of continual construction based on the use of symbolic actions (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003:4). These symbolic actions and utterances originate from a repertoire of socially-recognized actions which is variably-accessible to individuals. Individuals selectively choose from the repertoire of symbolic actions to perform their claimed identity. As stated by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, the construction of a gendered identity occurs as people "project their own claimed gendered identities, ratify or challenge others' identities, and in various ways support or

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[2] I have given all participants a pseudonym so as to protect their anonymity.

challenge systems of gender relations and privilege" (2003:4). The way in which the construction of identity occurs is through the performance of performative utterances and actions. According to Butler (1993), performance and performativity are distinct concepts; performance being "a bounded act" preceded by an actor and performativity "a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer" (24). However, this distinction is critiqued by Moya Lloyd who explains that performance is performative given that it also draws from a shared cultural reservoir and cannot be preceded by an actor as an actor does not simply exist but is constructed out of performative actions (1999:202). For the purposes of this article, I will use the terms synonymously according to Lloyd's critique of Butler's distinction. A performative statement is one that does not simply describe; it is "the doing of an action" (Austen 1962:5). The classic example is the statement, "I now pronounce you man and wife," uttered during traditional, heterosexual Christian marriage ceremonies. This statement, in being spoken by a priest at a marriage ceremony, creates the bond of marriage between the bride and the groom (Austin 1962:13). This conception of performance is equally applicable to other behaviours.

The performance of identity is a concept discussed in passing by participants during the games night. Participants expressed this concept when they assessed the gender identity of a waiter who works at a local restaurant.

> C:     And you get that *real* cute gay waiter that always talks ya into getting doubles.
> J:     Except, I was wondering if he was transgendered, 'cause I thought his voice got a lot higher [over a long period of time]

Here, the speech of the waiter is assessed by Ceri and John. The waiter is initially presented as a gay man by Ceri, yet the identity of the waiter is mapped onto language and how the pitch of his voice is manifested. As the pitch of the waiter's voice progressively increased, John saw the waiter as coming to perform more of a feminine, womanly identity. Very early in life, pitch comes to play an important role in gender distinction. At five years of age, boys and girls have almost identical vocal apparatuses; however, girls tend to raise, and boys lower, the pitch of their voice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003:18). This effect is produced through manipulating the length of the vocal tract by spreading or rounding their lips respectively (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003:18). Through the lens of this understanding of the association of voice pitch and gender, John came to view the waiter as a transgender person who is in the process of transitioning his characteristics to those of a woman. Participants thus used the principles of performance and performativity to assess and inquire about the gender identity of the waiter.

Similarly, sexuality and attraction are viewed in this group as non-static entities that must be performed. The following interaction occurs during a discussion of friends who have "gay tendencies." In the conversation, John is identified as the only heterosexual friend, but then a previous joke is continued from when he (unintentionally) answered "balls" to a question that asked "What would people be surprised to find out that you enjoy."

> A:     [All our friends have gay tendencies] Except
> maybe *him* [John] but
> [pause]

A:      {he likes balls}[3]
         {He likes!}
         {He likes!}
C:      {I don't know he likes balls}
D:      {He likes balls yeah}
T:      He hangs out with like, eighty gay people, I think we're starting to have an influence
         on em
…
D:      And she's bisexual [points to Amy]
[pause]
T:      She thinks.
D:      She thinks she's bisexual ok
T:      Personally, I think she is
…
T:      If you say I don't know, that means yes [you are bisexual]

Here, it is clear that sexuality is not conceived by these participants as the result of isolated, personal desires, but is derived from social interactions and the performative actions. For example, Tracy states that being immersed in a social group that contains a large number of queer people influences the sexuality of the heterosexual. The idea that the sexuality of one individual can be transferred to another is representative of Arnold van Gennep's contagious magic. Contagious magic, as stated by van Gennep, is "based on the belief that natural or acquired characteristics are material and transmissible" (1960[1908]:7). In this case, it is the belief that if a person interacts with queer people, they themselves must be part of that community. Tracy also critiques Amy's

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[3] Brackets signify that each utterance was made at the same time.

sexuality, as she believes that there is no room for a person to question or be unsure of their sexuality; Tracy mentions this twice during the conversation. She states that to answer 'I don't know' is actually to say 'yes,' and she states that Amy's uncertainty of her sexuality is a clear sign that she is, in fact, bisexual. This idea of either yes or no, but never maybe, is representative of a wider related idea which undermines bisexual identity itself: "Its [bisexuality's] reality or legitimacy is contested by some people on both sides of the hetero/homo divide" (Cameron and Kulick 2003:157n3). In this way, the context of the identity policing affects the legitimate identity choices. Therefore, in asserting a conception of sexuality which deviates from the legitimate expressions, the individual is reprimanded and defined by other members of the group. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the legitimate symbolic actions that are available to an individual to better understand how performance works. As well, the particular community in which a certain expression occurs heavily influences the type of performance of sexuality, and thus affects the identity being performed by the individual. In the case of the conversation, it is important to perform analysis within a context of a queer space that is constructed by the queer participants.

Given the nature of the game, many of the topics and sections of the conversation involved a large degree of humour. The humorous exchanges among participants played a variety of functions in the performance of queer identities and the discussion of these identities during the conversation. For example, various participants used one of the types of humorous speech that is characteristic of the performance of a queer identity: camp talk (Cameron & Kulick 2003:99). Camp talk, according to Keith Harvey, subdivides into various styles which include paradox,

inversion, ludicrism, and parody (Cameron & Kulick 2003:99). Butler theorizes that camp is a political type of humour as it "deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities" (Butler 1990:138). However, camp is also conceived as apolitical by V. Russo, who states that "it deals only frivolously with the roles we've been assigned and entails no criticism of them" (as cited in Darsey 1981[1976]:81). The following examples of camp, which represent ludicrism and inversion respectively, are taken from "La Paca," an Ecuadorian drag queen theatre production by Moreno.

> And never absent [at a drag performance] is the gay that says to you: "HEY… SISTER, YOU ARE SO FAT! Why do we have in our head that to be skinny is synonymous of beauty… There's not only flavour in the bone… it's also in the pork rind!"[4]

> Hey Paquita [character's name]: 'to love someone else, first you need to learn to love yourself' [said by boyfriend] to accept yourself as you are […] and when you have loved yourself sufficiently, you'll have so much left over that you will be able to give it to the world… clearly he said this 'cause he's a slut.[5] (Moreno 2010:120)

Camp is also exemplified in the following section of the games night conversation that discusses the responses to the question

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[4] "y nunca falta la loca que te diga: "OYE… ÑAÑITA ¡QUE GORDA QUE ESTAS!" Por qué tendremos metido en la cabeza que ser flaco es sinónimo de belleza… ¡no solo en el hueso hay sabor… también en el chicharrón!"

[5] "Oye Paquita: para querer a alguien, primero tienes que aprender a quererte" A aceptarte tal cual eres[…] y cuando ya te has querido lo suficiente, te sobrará tanto, pero tanto amor que podrás dárselo al mundo… claro eso decía el por que es un puto."

"What do you consider the most important physical feature men look for in a woman?"

> E:      Dick, boobs, tits!, a big dick!
> …
> [Laughing throughout]
> T:      Wait wait
> What was the question?
> …
> J:      This is something that men look for in women
> Did somebody mix up the question?
> [Pause]
> C:      No
> D:      No

The evaluation of the answers is a clear example of camp in that it inverts "the expected order or relation between signs" (Cameron & Kulick 2003:100). The answers 'tits' and 'boobs' are not questioned due to the fact that 1) women, who are assumed to also be females, have breasts, and 2) they are generally sexualized by men in this society. Through answering in an unexpected manner with the genitals of a male, the two gays, Ceri and I, change the focus to one that questions the idea that all men are necessarily looking for physical features in women as opposed to in other men. This example of camp works to undermine the "established value system" by acknowledging and challenging the heteronormative aspects of the game (Cameron & Kulick 2003:100). Also, the fact that this was not simply a misunderstanding of the demands of the question is signalled by the two 'no's. This works in contrary to the statement of John, which acts as a performance of an identity aligned with the heteronormativity that the game reinforces. Being a way to

undermine the values of the producers of the game, and an assertion of intentionality to the heterosexual, male member of the group, this example of camp aligns with Butler's politicized theory of camp, rather than that of Russo. The questioning of the heteronormativity in this section works to construct the boundary between the two gays and the values of the game.

Throughout the conversation, there was occasional discussion of activities or objects that index a queer identity. Indexicality is the indirect referencing of an identity through its association with what is assumed to be a pre-existing characteristic of that identity. This occurs following the moment when, John, in attributing which answer was given by each player, chose Ceri as having given the answer of apple martini to one of the questions. Earlier he chose Ceri as the one having written "big dick" in the above example. At this point, Ceri questions John's guesses, as he was not the one to give these answers, and the gender and sexual identities that these answers index.

> C:  *Why*[hits table] are you *always*[hits table] *choosing*[hits table] the *gayest*[hits table] *things*[hits table] for *me*[hits table]
> [laughter]
> J:  I, I thought
> C:  Suddenly I like appletinis and big dick

Here, both apple martinis and big dick are seen as indexes of an identity which is exceptionally gay, as described by Ceri. Earlier comments draw at least "big dick" into the sphere of a gay identity. Ceri earlier stated that John had to guess which person wrote "big dick" as an answer.

C:       Yeah now just pick which, which, which one of us four is a size queen

According to Hayes, in "gayspeak," the term used to refer to the language of gay men, 'queen' is one of the "most widely employed stem word[s] for building compounds," and refers generally to a gay man (1981:71). It therefore has general use among gay men and is used by them to refer to other gays or those who exemplify characteristics of gay men. Hayes provides the example of two gay men commenting on a well-dressed mayor by saying they are a "neat queen;" here, using the term queen does not refer to the sexuality of the mayor, but on their being well-dressed as gay men are generally seen to be (1981:71). Therefore, using the term 'size queen' as a way of saying 'one who is attracted to large penises,' draws this idea into the realm of a gay identity. In this way, the use of the term performs a gay identity, given its association with 'gayspeak' and with an individual who is assumed to be gay and who has, in other utterances has performed a gay identity.

Upon questioning Ceri about the connection of apple martinis to a gay identity, he stated to me, "I wanna say sex in the city or drag queens" (Ceri, email, March 30, 2013). While the exact reason that this indexes an extremely gay identity is not clear to the participant, it still works to represent a gay identity, yet the assumptions that are present within the explanation indicate connections to gay themes and themes of femininity. Drag queens are men who perform for comic, artistic, and theatrical motive, as an exaggerated form of a woman (Barrett 1995:152). Similarly, "Sex and the City," is a television program which is a fictional representation of the lives of women often featuring their gay friends. Overall, Ceri's use of the term gay*est*, in concert with the other terms used, defines one of the ways in which a gay identity is

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constructed. The gay*est* concepts defined by Ceri all involve femininity. For example, to like large penises is to be a size queen, (*queen*, as defined by Hayes (1981:71), also implies effeminate behaviour as it is the title of the highest-ranking woman in some types of monarchical systems); apple martinis call to drag queens and "Sex and the City." As all of these concepts call to femininity; therefore, in this case, to perform a gay identity is to perform one that is more feminine than masculine.

Gender and sexuality are identities that are constantly constructed and reinforced through the performance of various symbolic actions and utterances. The conversations that I recorded during the games night demonstrate a variety of performative actions. It is clear from the policing of the sexualities of John and Amy that sexuality is highly intertwined with social interactions based on van Gennep's concept of contagious magic and legitimate performances. Humorous exchanges of camp worked to create an inversion of the gender roles and values of the wider society to both signify a queer identity and create a queer space. Furthermore, various terms that call to femininity such as 'queen' and 'apple martini' are used throughout the conversation to continue the construction of a gay identity. Finally, it is through performance and performative statements that sexuality is constructed through the utilization of gendered actions and topics.

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# SHANTI'S BIRTHDAY: REFLECTIONS OF A TOURIST/VOLUNTEER/ ANTHROPOLOGIST

KAROLINE GUELKE

ABSTRACT

While doing volunteer work in a Nepali village, I participated in the birthday celebration for a young girl. This photo essay includes nine of the photographs I took that night, showing people sharing food, dancing, and resting. My goal is to tell the story of my experience that evening, but also to question my own position and impact as well as to explore some issues of power and authenticity that arise with the practice of photography. Taking pictures is not a neutral way of documenting; it relies on, and in turn affects, power relationships between people.

For three months during the fall of 2010 I volunteered for a local non-governmental organisation in Nepal, first teaching English in a Buddhist monastery and then helping with the design of a research project to assess the organization's development projects in rural communities. As part of this, I spent ten days living with a local family in Jitpurphedi, a village located about 17 kilometres from Kathmandu. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in Asia, ranking 157 out of 195 on the United Nations Human Development Index (UN Development Program 2014). Since the 1970s, tourism has been growing steadily and by 2013 provided seven percent of all jobs in

the country (WTTC 2014). Foreigners are an important source of revenue, and Nepalis joke that the country has three main religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, and tourism.

The photos included here were all taken during one evening as the family I stayed with celebrated the ninth birthday of their daughter Shanti.[6] Along with three other volunteers, I, a 36-year-old German-Canadian, spent the evening sitting on the narrow porch, eating with the family, dancing awkwardly, and taking photographs. My agenda with the camera was very much that of a tourist: capture that which seems different, intriguing and moving. While at the time I did not think much about this process, whenever I browse through the images or share them with friends and family, they raise more questions for me. In this photo essay I aim to describe my experience of that birthday celebration as well as to reflect on my role and on some of the issues of power and authenticity that are so entangled with the practice of photography. My goal is to raise questions and direct attention to some of the complexities of photography in the context of a specific setting.

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[6] All names are pseudonyms.

Figure 1

The preparations for Shanti's birthday had begun during the day, and shortly after dark, several family members arrived at the house. After the evening meal, a relative from Kathmandu brought out a cake for Shanti (in blue) and helped her cut it, as her sister Amita (in red) and friend Radha (in purple) looked on. During the ten days at the family's home the exact family relationships never became clear to me. People visited frequently during the day but were never introduced to us volunteers. Most of my communication was through Bishal, Shanti's father, who spoke English well. With the other household members and frequent visitors I used fragments of Nepali I knew, pieces of English they understood, and gestures we both hoped would translate.

The birthday celebration had started slowly, with people assembling casually and the women preparing the meal. We four volunteers sat in the far corner of the porch. There was a long period

when family members spoke Nepali amongst each other, laughed, and told stories that no one translated for us. Once the cake was brought out, attention shifted to Shanti.



Figure 2

Figure 3

Bishal gave his daughter a chain of marigolds, assembled by Amita during the afternoon, and a *tika* (or *tilaka*), the red mark on the forehead; both are meant to bestow blessings and good fortune. During festivals and other special events like birthdays, older family members typically give *tikas* to the younger ones (i.e. Granoff and Shinohara 2003).

While the houses along Jitpurphedi's main road are connected to the electrical grid, this does not guarantee power. Electricity in Kathmandu and the surrounding area is cut regularly in order to avoid overloading the system which results in scheduled power outages that can increase to several hours per day. The first picture was taken with a flash and makes the scene appear far lighter than it was; electricity was off during the whole evening, and the porch was lit only by a few candles. I took 35 photos in total that night, and the other three volunteers took many as well. We had

asked Bishal's permission at the beginning of the night, and he had said "Of course", shaking his head sideways in the local equivalent of a nod that is so confusing to Westerners. But did he know how many times we would use the flash, no doubt startling people on the dimly lit porch?



Figure 4

I missed – with my camera – the exact moment when Shanti got her *tika*, but I captured it when Amita leaned forward to receive hers. Tourists often seek "the authentic" in their journeys (MacCannell 1976; Wang 1999). This certainly seems like a real moment: the foreign ritual, the connection between the people, the pure joy on the girls' faces. Why are we so intrigued by other people's ritual practice? Travel itself has been described as a secular

ritual in which we seek to come close to the sacred before returning home (Graburn 2004).

Ironically it was only afterwards, when looking at the photos, that this moment became the 'special moment' for me, the one in which I may have caught a glimpse of the sacred. At the time I had been crouching on a low stool for almost three hours. My back was getting sore. I remember worrying about when to go to the toilet, not wanting to interrupt or miss anything. To what extent did the photos record the special moment then, and to what extent did they help create it?



Figure 5

Figure 6



Figure 7

After we ate the cake, there was music and dance. The men drummed and sang, while the women sang and clapped their hands. Amita danced several times, but Shanti seemed shy and had to be coaxed to take her turn. The other volunteers had stayed for a couple of weeks already and knew the songs well, whereas I struggled to follow along. Petite Silvia from Portugal expertly imitated the movements of the local women, while Brian from England threw in some hip-hop moves. I remember feeling big and awkward as I swung my arms around. But no matter our performance, the family clapped and cheered for the foreigners in their midst. I wonder how Shanti will remember our presence – were we mainly fun, strange, annoying, threatening, interesting, or simply irrelevant? All or none of the above?

It has been suggested that "the tourist gaze" is a way of exerting power over people (Urry 1990), and Sontag writes that photography "turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (1977:14). I remember wondering about the appropriateness of taking photos at the time, but only when looking at the pictures later did I start to wonder how much I had actually 'taken'. I had the means to capture private moments of this evening; I had the power to decide what to take the pictures of.

Figure 8

This photo is different. People do not look as beautiful or happy as in the other pictures; it shows a moment when nothing much was happening, and people were taking a break. Shanti got very tired by the end of the evening. You can see garbage on the floor; poverty and exhaustion have become visible. Some anthropologists have pointed out that, while we tend to stay away from poorer areas in our own hometowns, as tourists we may find poverty quaint and exotic (Pruitt and LaFont 2004). Tourist brochures, postcards and souvenirs often market romanticized images of the poor. Throughout my stay I remember feeling unsettled by the obvious difference in material wealth. While Bishal's family is one of the wealthiest in the village, partly from receiving payments from volunteers, the fact remains that all of us Western visitors are materially far more secure than this family. We

have chosen to experience living like this for a short period of time; we are only here for a momentary glimpse of the life of "the Other" before we return to the comforts of home.



Figure 9

The next morning I walked along the village road, turned around and took this picture of Bishal's house. The road was unusually quiet except for a woman carrying a heavy load, a common sight in rural Nepal. I remembered feeling both connected and disconnected from people the previous evening. A member of the Mursi, an Ethiopian tribal group, once complained to an anthropologist about tourists taking pictures: "You tell us – why do they photograph us?...Is it just that they want to know who we are, or what?...What do they do with the photographs" (Turton 2004:8)? Was my photography a way of getting closer, of coming to know better? As time passes, I will forget more and more details of my

visit with Bishal's family; the photographs provide a way of reaching back, but they also already shape my memories of that experience.

Photography is never a neutral act; it plays out in a web of power relationships and adds its own dynamic. It does not simply document relationships but also creates them in the process (i.e. Edwards 1997; Pinney 2011). It was a position of power in the first place that allowed me to take these photographs, and, while the images give me a feeling of greater connectedness with people, in a certain way they also perpetuate the power differential between us.

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# ETHNOGRAPHY FROM WITHIN: A REVIEW ESSAY OF ALLISON PUGH'S *LONGING AND BELONGING; PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND CONSUMER CULTURE*

REVIEW

Allison J. Pugh. *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009, 320 pp.

KATIE K. MACLEOD

ABSTRACT

This review essay provides an overview of Allison Pugh's ethnography *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture,* with particular attention to her methodological approaches and positionality as both an insider and an outsider within the context of her research. Through participant observation and interviews with children and parents in three schools in Oakland, California that span social classes, Pugh is able to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of how childhood consumerism in the North America is centered on a desire to belong rather than influences of advertising and marketing. She is able to deploy various concepts such as performivity, economy of dignity, and consumption to examine the deeper symbolic and socio-cultural significances attached to children's desire to belong and parent's

feelings of obligation in their decisions to purchase consumer products.

All North Americans are aware of the impact that consumer culture has on our lives to some degree. Through a case study of schools and families in Oakland, California, Allison Pugh demonstrates the degree to which consumer culture influences childhood and the structure of families in the United States. *Longing and Belonging* is a well-written, thoroughly researched multi-sited ethnography that reveals an important perspective on childhood belonging and consumerism across social classes. In this unique study of social inequality, Pugh, a sociologist, provides important contributions to methodological approaches in this strong example of insider ethnography. Throughout Pugh's ethnography, there is a cohesive and well-articulated presentation of methodological frameworks that can be useful to the disciplines of anthropology and sociology.

In this review essay I will provide an overview of Pugh's research project and findings regarding childhood consumerism and belonging. I will then explore the ways in which Pugh's position as an insider in her research has both methodological strengths and challenges. I allude to how Pugh's position as an American, a mother, and a consumer place her, to varying degrees, as an insider. Throughout my review, I will examine Pugh's positionality and access to sites and informants in order to determine the degree to which she is able to retain a position as an insider across social classes and institutions. In addition, I will identify the challenge of how her position shifted to that of an outsider in particular contexts of her study.

Pugh provides a unique perspective about children who desire particular products and the symbolic reasoning for consumer purchases on the part of the parents through participant observation among children in various schools and interviews with the parents of these children. She conducted participant observation in three schools, Oceanview and Arrowhead, both of which had predominately affluent students, and Sojourner Truth. Research at Oceanview and Arrowhead was conducted during school hours while her research at Sojourner Truth was conducted at an afterschool program, which was provided to lower-income students. After gaining access to these schools, Pugh was able to interview families to obtain a parental perspective on issues related to consumerism and belonging.

Drawing upon Erving Goffman's (1967) work on 'saving face,' Pugh uses the term 'facework' as the performance aspect of what she describes as 'the economy of dignity.' The economy of dignity is a process of justification for product consumption used by both children and parents. Children use facework to explain to themselves and to their peers the reasons for not possessing the products they desire. What Pugh discovers through her observation of both lower-income and affluent children is that all children experience desire for a sense of belonging among their peers regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, space, and the employment of diverse facework. In addition, for the parents, the economy of dignity is based on a desire for their children to belong. Furthermore, Pugh argues that parents are very responsive to their children's consumer wants regardless of socio-economic status, but lower-income and affluent parents have different symbolic attachments to their buying habits.

Later in the book, Pugh explores parental buying habits and provides further detail on the economy of dignity. She notes that the economy of dignity is not necessarily based in materialism of the actors but rather in the socio-cultural meanings that are attached to material items and how these meanings are negotiated in the child's and parent's worlds. She then introduces the process of *symbolic deprivation* whereby affluent parents tend to contradict their culture, beliefs, and values with their buying practices. While parents would feel anxiety and express ambivalence in purchasing the products their children wanted, symbolic deprivation allowed them to provide self-justification for their purchases. She further explains this through interviews with affluent parents. The affluent parents say they do not buy their children certain items, such as violent video games or "cheap" toys, but later make the purchases in order to enhance the child's belonging among their peers. Furthermore, Pugh describes how lower-income parents tend to attempt to add value to their child's social world by purchasing 'wants' that are outside of the family's means though what she terms *symbolic indulgence*. In this case, lower-income parents tended to draw back on personal and family necessities in order to make purchases for their children. In both lower-income and affluent cases, despite instances of having to say 'no,' parents tended to want to provide hope and shelter their children from their own experiences of not belonging in their own childhoods.

Pugh provides a detailed analysis of the stratifications that exists across the three schools she conducted research. Additionally, she provides a comprehensive overview of her methodological approach, noting that her research intended to avoid the exoticization and exploitation of the Other (Pugh 2009: 44). Aligning herself with postcolonial and feminist schools of thought, she notes that she chose

to distance herself from other studies on social class and social inequality that have a tendency to focus on marginalized subgroups to demonstrate societal problems. Her intention is to explore the insider perspective rather than that of the Other through conducting her research in her own community of Oakland, which she goes on to describe as "studying up," rather than insider ethnography.

Insider ethnography has challenged the tradition of the study of the Other and has enabled researchers to study their own people, cultures, and societies. This distances ethnography and the discipline of anthropology from its colonial past. When the ethnographer is native to the population of study, different challenges are presented. Without the presence of what Narayan (1993) describes as "genuine natives" there is less separation of the researcher and the self from the informants, society, and culture in which the research is being conducted.

Pugh is forthcoming about her position within the research. She notes that informants viewed her as a middle class white woman, a graduate student, and a mother. It is evident that while her informants viewed her as an insider in most instances, she remained an outsider in others. Pugh paid significant attention to her own personal understanding of social inequality to position herself within the complex situations of social stratification that were at play in her study. With social class as a central point of exploration in her approach to childhood consumer culture and the reasoning behind purchases, she exposes her own social class to the reader.

Pugh attempts to situate herself as an insider in both upper and lower class settings in which she conducted research through her own personal family narrative. Within this narrative Pugh notes that she felt she did not quite belong in either world as she had an immigrant grandfather as well as another grandfather who belonged

to an upper-class country club. In line with Narayan's (1993) assertion that anthropologists are neither insiders or outsiders in their research, Pugh's attempt to position herself as both within and between social categories. This narrative reads as justification of her position as an insider ethnographer whereby she felt it was necessary to demonstrate that her personal history allowed her to understand the significance of social inequality across social class.

In many instances, her position as an insider increased her access to knowledge, gave her freedom of movement and an ability to view things that would be overlooked by outsiders (Karra and Phillips 2008). Both Arrowhead and Oceanview were receptive of her research as they had experience with researchers in the past and parents did not take issue with the study. The shorter timeframes spent in both Oceanview and Arrowhead is reflective of her ability to retain an insider position within these institutions and among middle to upper class families. The familiarity with the researchers by school employees, and parents seeing Pugh as similar to themselves, allowed her to attain a higher degree of access much faster at Oceanview and Arrowhead than she was able to secure at Sojourner Truth.

Sojourner Truth was less responsive to Pugh's inquiry to study at the school and families were hesitant to participate in the project. Pugh conducted three years of fieldwork at the Sojourner Truth afterschool program. In addition, Pugh described the lower-income families as seeing her as distant where the affluent families were able to relate to her and in some instances said that the interview was like talking to a friend. Expanding on this information provided by Pugh, I contend that within Sojourner Truth and among the parents of lower social class Pugh was seen as an outsider rather than an insider.

Although she possesses a personal history that she partially identifies as lower class, the families associated with Sojourner Truth, viewed her as an outsider. As much as she articulated a desire to "study up" and distance herself from the concept of the Other, there is a degree to which this was this was difficult to avoid in the circumstances of the lower-income families and institution. However, despite initial difficulties, she was able to gain the necessary access, trust, and relationships to gain rich data on the lower-income aspect of her study. The longer timeframe at this site demonstrates the time commitment and difficultly of access that comes with being viewed as an outsider within a community of ethnographic study.

Insider research has to be as ethical, respectful, reflexive, and critical as an outsider would be in the same context (Smith 1999:139). Pugh as a sociologist, in a discipline that has a higher degree of focus on the problems in ones own society, was able to create a degree of balance of ethics, respect, reflexivity, and critique in her ethnography that allowed for a cohesive methodological approach that resulted in rich data on consumerism among children and parents in Oakland, California. The text is an excellent example of insider ethnography and provides a detailed methodology section that sets up the reader for understanding the ethnographic process that was carried out throughout the project. The methodological approaches set out by Pugh will also provide students with a useful model for questions of positionality within the ethnographic process.

A well-researched ethnography should not be subject of critique solely on the basis of ones position as an outsider or an insider; as eloquently articulated by Narayan "…as anthropologists we do fieldwork whether or not we were raised close to the people who we study. Whatever the methods used, the process of doing

fieldwork involves getting to know a range of people and listening closely to what they say" (1993: 679). Despite different methodological challenges when viewed as an outsider or an insider in research settings, a well-developed ethnography can create a necessary distance from the creation of the Other and demonstrate new knowledge about a new culture or, in the case of *Longing and Belonging,* our very own.

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# AN EXPLORATION OF TACTILE INTERACTION IN OSTEOLOGY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

THOMAS SIEK

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of touch in osteology. Though this field is heavily reliant on sight, touching and handling bones provides another aspect of learning and research that complements visual inspection. I show how handling skeletal elements is central to osteological analysis by examining tactility's prevalence in osteological practices, vocabulary and descriptions. I also review how touch as a method of learning has been employed in museum contexts and in biology classes for the blind.

The senses of sight, taste, sound, touch and smell are biological adaptations that provide an individual with necessary data about their surroundings and are also used as a means of learning. Each of the senses gives a better understanding of what is being experienced or examined. For example, when presented with a lit candle, one can see that the candle is burning but can also feel the heat from the flame. By engaging each of the senses, one's potential to learn and understand is multiplied. The senses each receive and correlate information about the external world, and are combined to produce a multisensory experience (Spence 2007:45). This is what makes the senses particularly useful in research that involves

material objects, including osteology, the study of bones.  Though this field is heavily reliant on sight, the application of touch provides another avenue for data collection that expands on visual cues.

Touch enhances the impression a person has of the nature of an object, mostly through confirming what cannot be determined by sight alone (Classen 2005:277).  Many things including weight, texture and temperature cannot be determined purely by sight or sound.  For example when a person lifts an object, thinking it to be heavy, and finds that it is in actuality very light.  Touch also gives a person an intimate experience between themselves and the object. For instance, in order for sight to be most effective, a person must put a certain amount of distance between themselves and whatever they are looking at.  This results in a detachment between the person and the object; each is its own entity, separate from each other by negative space.  However, touch removes this barrier and gives the person a physical connection with the object (Classen 2005:277). There is also a sense of pleasure that touching an object can give. John Hull, a blind professor of religious studies at the University of Birmingham, expressed the satisfaction he receives from handling and interacting with various objects when he stated, "I am developing the art of gazing with my hands.  I like to hold and rehold and go on holding a beautiful object, absorbing every aspect of it" (2005:326).  For Hull, touching an object is not merely the act of holding something, but it is a process of appreciation, much like when a sighted person spends time gazing at a portrait. This is especially the case for man-made objects, as handling and touching them brings the person closer to not only the object but also what that object represents (Classen 2005:277).  In a museum context, this yearning to touch and handle artefacts gives satisfaction through the intimacy that touch creates.  For instance, by donning the helmet of a

Roman centurion or holding the sword of a knight, one creates a personal connection not only to the object but also to the person or historical era that it is associated with. By trying on a centurion's helmet, one can appreciate its weight, the feel of it around the head and perhaps even imagine how the original owner would have experienced this object in battle.

## TOUCH IN THE MUSEUM: HANDS OFF LEARNING?

At the Enlightenment Gallery in the British Museum, a table is set up every day with different objects that the public is encouraged to handle and examine. The objects include small pieces that vary in their geographic and temporal origins, such as a fragment of Egyptian mummy cloth and a shark's tooth necklace from the Pacific (Candlin 2008:278). Though it is expected that the objects presented are either replicas or small pieces of no real historical significance, visitors find a sort of novelty in being allowed to touch an object within a museum.

For many, the thought of being able to pass one's hand along the face of a painting or feel the fabric of an ancient headdress is taboo as museums are purely a visual experience and the use of touch is prohibited. If an interactive exhibit is offered, it is assumed to be intended for children, as if touch has no relevance to material culture once maturity has been reached (Candlin 2008:279). The practice of inviting museum visitors to touch the artefacts within the collection might appear as if a taboo is being broken, but this was not always the case. In the 17th and 18th centuries touching and handling museum artefacts was socially acceptable (Classen 2005:275). Early museums grew from the private collections of individuals and being able to see the objects within the collection was done only through invitation. Social protocol called for the host to act as curator and

give a guided tour of the collection to their guests, offering up the objects for handling and interaction (Classen 2005:275). The guests on their part were expected to ask questions and handle the objects that were offered to them; "to be invited to peruse a collection of exotic artefacts and *objets d'art* and *not* touch anything would be like being invited to someone's home for dinner and not touching the food" (Classen 2005:275). Furthermore, social protocol established that the reverence of the host would be given to the guests and not the objects within the collection; not allowing the guests to touch the pieces could lead to accusations of incivility (Classen 2005:275-276).

As these collections grew larger and more public, the touching of museum pieces was slowly phased out beginning in the 19th century, partially due to the status the objects were given. Artworks began to be recognized as masterpieces while artefacts from far off lands were becoming irreplaceable treasures; these objects slowly became regarded as sacrosanct (Classen 2005:282). As more people began to visit museums, curators feared that constant handling of the pieces would lead to theft or damage. This was especially the concern for pieces that were centuries old and slowly deteriorating; these precious objects had to be preserved at all costs (Classen 2005:282). The other factor that hastened touch's banishment from museums was the visitors that came to see the collection. When museums were still relatively small and privately owned, the collector would ensure that only those they personally deemed "worthy," namely those not of the uncultured, working class, could handle pieces from the collection. But as the museums became open to a larger public, the quality of the visitors became more varied and curators soon found it difficult to ensure only those deemed acceptable would touch the artefacts on display (Classen 2005:281). Soon after,

museum visitors had to become conditioned to the taboo of touching museum pieces. This was accomplished by establishing that the object was more important than the person viewing it, and touching was thus disrespectful, damaging and dirty. Above all the museums instilled a belief that touch had no value in experiencing or learning (Classen 2005:282). Along with propagating these beliefs the museums employed other techniques to discourage touch that are still seen today, including housing their pieces in display cases and using railings to prevent people from getting to close.

In recent decades there has been a shift from museums being centers for scholarly research and depositories for the world's treasures to more informal resources for learning and social inclusion. Since funding for national museums is correlated with audience statistics including the working class and those from low income, museums can simply not afford to alienate prospective guests (Candlin 2007:89-90). In response, museum displays, including sensory and interactive exhibits are created to be appealing to diverse age groups and non-traditional museum visitors (Candlin 2007:90). For instance, the Nottingham Loans collection offers loan boxes and handling collections for school and community groups with the aim of allowing students to interact with objects linked to the theme of their studies (Trewinnard-Boyle and Tabassi 2007:192).

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING AMONG THE BLIND

Helen Keller, the blind and deaf American author and political activist, had once said, "touch brings the blind many sweet certainties which our more fortunate fellows miss, because their sense of touch is uncultivated [...]. No doubt that is one reason why their knowledge is often so vague, inaccurate and useless" (1909:42). Keller's musing illustrates how the blind experience touch and how

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they apply it to gathering information and learning. The blind must rely on other senses to accompany their education and their sense of touch must therefore be cultivated and honed to a greater extent than that of the sighted. In this way, better distinctions can be made in regard to differentiating objects as well as recognizing variety in weight, texture and shape.

When tactile sensation replaces visual information, modifications and adaptations are an essential for those in academia. For instance, many books can be made available in braille and there are technologies that allow the blind to effectively use computers. However osteology and paleopathology, the study of ancient diseases, are highly visual disciplines reliant on observation for research and data generation. Since the natural environment is visually perceived in terms of its descriptions and explanations, some teachers assume that the physical aspects of biology are practically impossible to teach to blind students and this attitude has persisted over time (Davis and Redden 1978:177; Supalo 2010:1). However, according to Tombaugh and Tombaugh's (1984) manual for teaching biology to the blind, there are a number of tactile techniques that can be employed. For instance anatomy is best studied through the use of models and raised line drawings (Tombaugh and Tombaugh 1984:8). In regards to osteology, bone structure can be made clear by allowing the student to handle the bone and experience the different shapes, while being given verbal instruction. Bony features such as anatomical landmarks could be learned by guiding the student's hands; other features that cannot be easily felt such as small foramina or holes within the bone can be distinguished by inserting a small piece of wire or pipe cleaner that has a label printed in braille (Tombaugh and Tombaugh 1984:8). Interestingly, Tombaugh and Tombaugh observed that details of bone structure are more evident

to students with good tactile ability (1984:8). Tombaugh also noted that during animal dissections, blind students were able to locate and identify small organs through the use of touch much more easily than the sighted students who relied on finding the organs visually (1972:259). It is very likely that this could be the same for learning bone morphology; touch can be used to not only identify individual bones but also the anatomical features.

## USING TOUCH IN OSTEOLOGY

Osteology seeks to learn about the lives of ancient and modern people by examining their physical remains (Sofaer 2012:137). This study reconstructs the life and identity of an individual based on evidence presented in their skeleton and explores a variety of areas of human life, including sex, age, variation, disease, injury, diet, migration, activity patterns, and biological distance between kin groups. This discipline gains its importance from not only its applications in modern forensic contexts, but also in its ability to give a semblance of identity to the unnamed, unknown dead (Sofaer 2012:137). Like other biological sciences, osteology is heavily a visually oriented, descriptive form of study and as such, osteologists may employ the metaphor of needing to be able to 'read the body,' further enforcing the use of visual observation (Sofaer 2012:139). However, despite the emphasis on what is seen by the researcher, much of the work of an osteologist is done with the hands and the sense of touch. Through the use of touch, osteologists produce data by using their tactile abilities to probe and manipulate the bones in a way that would be impossible to accomplish solely through visual methods (Sofaer 2012:140). In its simplest form, employing touch as an osteological method includes rotating the bone to see its various angles and spatial dimensions, as

well as feeling the surface texture of the bone. Though it may sound simplistic, this method gives insight to the osteologist regarding the bone's present condition and clues as to how further analysis should proceed. Yet despite its importance, touch is often relegated as secondary to what is visually seen. For instance, in academic journals, osteologists will frequently describe what was seen on the bones but rarely refer to what was felt (Sofaer 2012:140). Despite this, the use of touch is reflected in the language used to describe what is seen in osteological contexts. Terms such as smooth, rough, granular, porous, sharp, and dull appear frequently in osteological literature to describe skeletal features and pathologies. Such an instruction can be seen in *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains* when looking at the mandible and assessing the pronunciation of the mental eminence: "hold the mandible between the thumbs and index fingers with thumbs on either side of the mental eminence. Move the thumbs medially until they delimit the lateral borders of the mental eminence" (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:20). Furthermore, osteology handbooks give instruction on how to properly physically handle bones so as to prevent damaging them. For instance, White and Folkens advise that a skull should be held with both hands and that one should never use the thumb and fingers to grip it by the eye orbits or the zygomatic arches (2005:75). In osteology classes, students are encouraged to not only feel the bones but interact with them as well, learning about their relative size, shape, volume, weight, curvature, depth and other spatial features (Sofaer 2012:141). Students are also encouraged to feel their own bones to help understand how they articulate as well as feeling distinguishable characteristics such as the occipital protuberance of the male skull (Sofaer 2012:143). However, despite the prevalence of touch in osteological practices, vocabulary and

descriptions, there are no specific lectures or tutorials given to students that offer sound instruction on *how* to touch bones or how to *interpret* what is felt. For the most part, this method is largely intuitive and developed individually over the course of years of experience from touching and handling different skeletal elements (Sofaer 2012:141).

When beginning analysis, the osteologist will first arrange the bones in their anatomical position on a table and then pick them up individually for examination and identification. This initial stage allows the researcher to see the bone from various angles as well as gain an impression of the bone's weight and surfaces (Sofaer 2012:140). The next step is to establish the biological profile of the individual by ascertaining the sex, age and ancestry of the skeleton. In the human skeleton sex is best determined by examining the pelvis, as the pelvic girdle is morphologically adapted for child birth in females. To accommodate birthing, the female pelvis is typically wider than the male pelvis, but this generalization is only visually observable when the pelvis is compared to another of known sex (White and Folkens 2005:392). Variation among humans also hampers visual observation. To compensate for this, various techniques using touch are employed. One such method includes examination of the greater sciatic notch, which is generally wider in females and narrower in males. To examine this, some osteologists will hold the os coxae against a diagram or simply place their thumb in the notch itself (Figure 1); if their thumb fits snugly then the bone is more characteristic of a male.
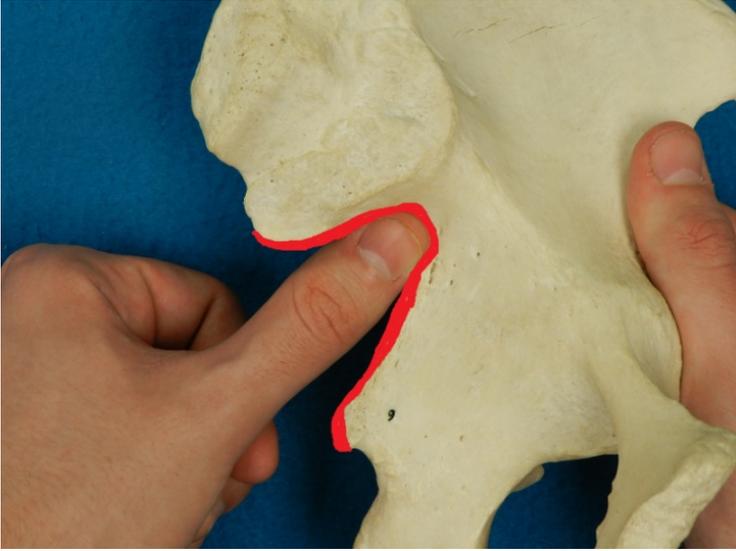
Figure 1. Judging the greater sciatic notch (highlighted in red) with the thumb (Siek 2013a)

Another technique for sex estimation is to recreate the sub-pubic angle of the pelvis. To do this, the osteologist will hold the os coxae and manipulate them so that they articulate as they would in life (Sofaer 2012:140). Doing this recreates the characteristic sub-pubic angle, which is generally wider in females than it is in males, however it can only be accomplished by physically manipulating the individual bones (Figure 2).
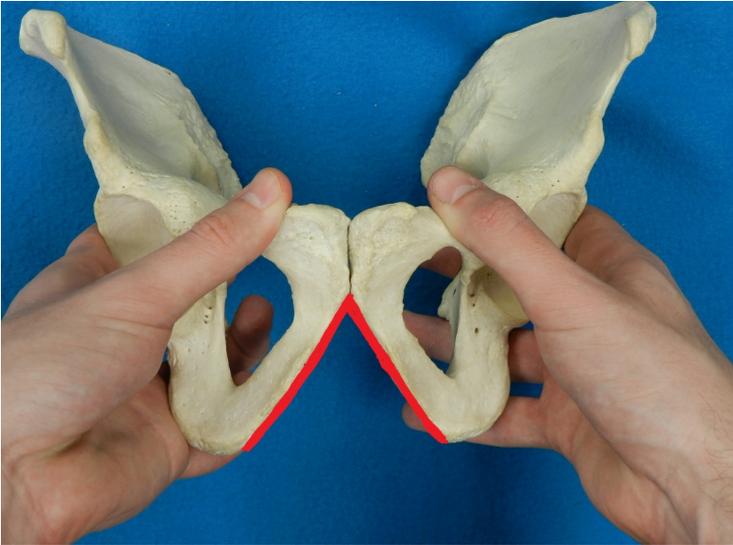
Figure 2. Manipulating the os coxae to recreate the sub-pubic angle (highlighted in red) (Siek 2013b).

The main method for sex estimation with the pelvis that employs the use of touch was developed by Phenice (1969). This method looks at three traits on the pubic bone: the ventral arc, the sub- pubic concavity and the medial aspect of the ischiopubic ramus. The ventral arc is a ridge of bone that is more pronounced in females and when being examined, some osteologists will run their finger over this trait, following its progress along the bone. With the sub-pubic concavity, some osteologists will line up their index finger with the edge of the pubis and see whether a concavity or gap is formed between the bone and their finger; if a concavity is formed then that is another indication that the pelvis possibly belongs to a female (Phenice 1969:300). The last trait, the medial aspect of the ischiopubic ramus, is characterized by a narrow crest of bone and is verified by pinching the trait between the thumb and index finger.

By applying these tactile techniques to the Phenice (1969) method the osteologist is assisted by their sense of touch in confirming the visual appearance of the traits and in determining whether they are significantly pronounced enough to determine the skeleton's biological sex.

The Phenice (1969) method uses language that instructs the eyes as well as the hands (Sofaer 2012:140). For instance, the ventral arc is described in osteological textbooks as being a "ridge of bone which sweeps down the surface of the pubic bone to merge with the border of the inferior pubic ramus" (Mays 2010:40). Likewise, Buikstra and Ubelaker's osteological standards manual states that the medial aspect of the ischiopubic ramus is "broad and flat in males" (1994:17). Both of these descriptions give not only a visual clue as to how to identify these traits but also a contextual reference to shape and dimension that can be confirmed by touch. Apart from the pelvis, the skull is also used in sex determination and tangibly descriptive language is used, such as, "feel the surface of the occipital with your hand and note any surface rugosity, ignoring the contour of the underlying bone" (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:19). In this way touch is being used to distinguish between different types of texture, something that would be difficult to accomplish by sight alone. Buikstra and Ubelaker continue by describing the upper edges of the eye orbits when they state, "begin by holding your finger against the margin of the orbit at the lateral aspect of the supraorbital foramen. Then hold the edge of the orbit between your fingers to determine its thickness" (1994:19). In this example osteologists receive instruction on how to properly hold the skull and determine the thickness of the upper eye orbit where thinner margins would suggest a female skull and thicker margins would suggest male.

In determining age, the language used in various osteological methods also encompasses terms that refer to touch and how things should feel; this is clearly seen in the methods developed by Todd (1921) and Lovejoy et al. (1985). To estimate age of a skeleton, Todd (1921) looked at the morphological changes of the pubic symphysis, the space where the two pelvic bones articulate. This method uses 10 distinct phases that allows the osteologist to estimate age up to around fifty years. More importantly, each of these phases employs tactile terms that encourage the researcher to feel the symphyseal face. For example *Phase 1* states that, "[the] symphyseal face [is] rugged, transverse by horizontal ridges separated by well-marked grooves" (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:22). In this description terms such as "rugged" and "grooves" invite the researcher to feel the bone. *Phases 3* and *5* mention "sharp lipping" (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:22), another feature that can be more easily determined by running one's finger up the side of the bone and feeling if it catches along the lipped edge of the pubic symphysis. Todd's (1921) method was later adapted to become the Suchey-Brooks method based upon the works of Brooks and Suchey (1990) and Suchey and Katz (1986). This system lists six phases that describe the morphological change in the pubic symphysis and also uses a language that emphasizes touch. For example, *Phases 5* and *6* mention the formation of a depression in the symphyseal face (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:23) that can only be really noticed by pressing one's finger directly onto to the bone and feeling it. Similar terminology can be seen in Lovejoy et al.'s (1985) use of the auricular surface for age determination. The auricular surface is located on the os coxae where the bone articulates with the sacrum to create the pelvis; much like the pubic symphysis, it too undergoes morphological changes as a person ages (White and Folkens

2005:247; Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:24).   Using eight phases, Lovejoy et al. (1985) apply tactile terminology that helps the researcher to make visual distinctions.  For instance, *Phase 1* makes reference to "fine granularity," and *Phase 3* mentions a "coarsening" of the surface until it becomes completely dense by *Phase 6* (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994:25).

Paleopathological textbooks such as *The Archaeology of Disease* also employ tactile language.  For example in referring to individuals who were scalped: "new bone formation eventually occurs if the person survives and the healed surface appears depressed, smooth and variable in thickness" (Roberts and Manchester 2007:117).   Another example includes linear enamel hypoplasia, a dental pathology indicating periods of stress during tooth development.  This pathology is described as "lines, pits or grooves on the enamel surface" (Roberts and Manchester 2007:75). Due to their sometimes-faint appearance, linear enamel hypoplasia can be difficult to identify solely through a visual observation, and often osteologists will pass a finger along the tooth's surface to feel the grooves to confirm the pathology's presence when technological equipment is unavailable.

## CONCLUSION

Touch enables a better understanding of studies involving material objects and acts as a complement to visual observation by verifying and confirming what sight can only estimate such as weight, texture and temperature. As a discipline rooted in material culture, osteology is highly visual and contains a substantial tactile component. Touch provides another avenue for data collection and expands on visual cues in areas including the determination of sex

and age, as well as the recognition and confirmation of skeletal features and pathologies.

In museums, the high seat of material culture, touching collection pieces was originally an expected part of the visitor's experience. Despite this practice being discouraged for both practical and theoretical reasons, such as the risk of damage and the importance and value placed on the object, touch has been re-emerging in museums through interactive exhibits and specialized handling collections. By holding an object a dynamic element is added to the visitor's experience beyond passively looking through a glass case; handling an object creates a personal connection and enables a better understanding the significance of what that object represents. Like museum visitors handling artefacts, osteologists holding and manipulating skeletal remains develop a similar personal connection as they gather information to determine sex, age and other anthropological data. The skeletal remains are given an identity and an understanding of their life as well as the time they lived in.

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