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Table of Contents

Letter from the Editors

The 2019 edition of *The Ethnograph: Journal of Anthropological Studies* is pleased to include student research from a variety of anthropological subfields. In addition to individual research papers, this year's journal features an Honours Communication from **Nicolas El-Haik Wagner** on his thesis, *A smoked salmon salad and a glass of Bordeaux: Cultivating Social Distinction and Negotiating Femininity Through the Consumption of Western Food in Post-Reform China*.

In this installment, "Best Publication" Award winner **Isabel Sobotkiewicz** walks us through an exploration of rave culture and affect, which inspired cover art by **Maya Rodrigo-Abdi**. Featuring additional socio-cultural essay submissions by **Nicolas El Haïk-Wagner**, **Brianna Plant**, **Karan Varshney**, **Nicole Anderson**, **Deborah Komkov**, **Gwendolyn Topacio** and **Bonney Ruhl**, as well as archaeological papers from **Curtis J. Logan** and **Anna Zaplowska**, *The Ethnograph* remains dedicated to showcasing the highest-quality student research the UBC Department of Anthropology has to offer.

We would like to extend a special thanks to our faculty sponsor, **Dr. Sabina Magliocco**, as well as the team of student editors that have made this project possible. We appreciate each and every contributor that has volunteered their time and energy in order to ensure that this collection of undergraduate research is made available to UBC students, faculty, staff and beyond. We are all looking forward to future volumes in the years to come.

Many thanks,

Emily Laurent Henderson

Megan Soderlund

Author Biographies

Nicole Anderson is a Social Anthropology graduate who is now pursuing a Masters in Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto. She has been published in "The Unfamiliar", as well as "Re:think: A Journal of Creative Ethnography", and has presented at the Museum Ethnographers Group conference twice—once at the University of Oxford, and more recently at the Horniman Museum in London. Her specialisations include post-colonial politics, museum studies, heritage and memory, and Indigenous-settler relationships.

Nicolas El Haïk-Wagner is a fourth-year anthropology major at UBC, enrolled in the Dual Degree program with Sciences Po Paris (France). His research interests include identity politics in contemporary France, masculinity studies and socio-cultural change in China. Drawing on fieldwork in Shanghai, China, his Honours undergraduate thesis examines how the food patterns of the Chinese urban middle-class interplay with Occidentalist representations, as well as the gendered strategies of social distinction used by China's post-reform millennials. Nicolas recently coordinated an upper-level seminar (ASTU 400: Shaping Men: An Ethnographic Approach to Masculinities) which proposed a cross-cultural exploration of the meanings associated with masculinity in the wake of the #MeToo debates. A strong believer in the power of civil society, he was the co-President of Sciences Po Environment (Reims campus) in France.

Deborah Komkov is a third-year sociocultural anthropology major from Anchorage, Alaska. Through her volunteer work in South America and Southeast Asia, she was drawn to the various socio-political forces which shape culture. At UBC, she studies how culture is affected by international relations, with emphasis on the anthropology of globalization and international development. Deborah appreciates first-hand methodologies to solve such issues, and looks forward to doing fieldwork in Sardinia in the summer of 2019. She intends on writing an Honours thesis after working in Global Affairs during the 2019-2020 school year.

Curtis J. Logan is a fourth-year integrated science major at UBC, studying immunology, pathology, and molecular genetics. He has always held a curiosity for archaeology, which has led him to pursue coursework in the field—at UBC and abroad. In the summer of 2017, he attended the Slavia Field School for Mortuary Archaeology in Drawsko, Poland, and went on to pursue a Directed Readings course in Paleopathology. The course allowed him to apply his experience working in the UBC Gross Anatomy lab, and as an undergraduate academic assistant in the UBC Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences, in order to critically analyse current issues and literature in paleopathological research. Curtis hopes to apply his studies in contemporary virology to those pathogens encountered by ancient human populations.

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Brianna Plant is an undergraduate student at the University of British Columbia, majoring in Anthropology, with a minor in anthropological archaeology. Her research interests are folklore, and community archaeology.

Gwendolyn Topacio is a 4th year anthropology major and archaeology minor. During the 2018/2019 academic year, she served as the ASA's Co-President and as an editor for The Ethnograph's 2019 edition. Over the last two summers, Gwen has had the opportunity to work in museum collections and take on curatorial roles at UBC's MOA, The Reach Gallery Museum, and the New Westminster Museum and Archives. In June 2018, Gwen attended her first archaeological field school in Sozopol, Bulgaria. She plans on pursuing a career in Consulting Archaeology and GIS Mapping upon graduation.

Isabel Sobotkiewicz is a fifth-year honours student specializing in sociocultural anthropology. Her research has focused on raves, collective experiences, and affect theory. She is particularly interested in understanding how communities come to be, and the ways in which affect theory can be applied to conceptualizations of community.

Karan Varshney is an undergraduate anthropology student in the final year of his program. He is primarily interested in the sub-discipline of medical anthropology, and seeks to become both a medical anthropologist and physician specializing in infectious diseases. During his years at university, Karan has spent a significant amount of time volunteering in public healthcare, including a children's hospice, suicide hotline, the Canadian Cancer Society, and a neuropsychiatric unit.

Anna Zapalowska graduated with a Bachelor's in anthropology from UBC in 2019. She has a keen interest in ethnobotany, as well as anthropological archaeology—specifically pertaining to lithics, and the evolution of early hominins. She is also interested in visual anthropology and material culture, particularly the way in which one creates the museum visitor experience. In the summer of 2018, she attended the Horvat Midras excavations in Israel, where she gained firsthand knowledge of archaeological methods, and contemporary Israel.

Honours Communication

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Title: "'A smoked salmon salad and a glass of Bordeaux' Cultivating Social Distinction and Negotiating Femininity Through the Consumption of Western Food in Post-Reform China"

Supervision: Dr. Alexia Bloch and Dr. Sabina Magliocco

My Honours thesis began in the summer of 2018, with a three-month internship at the Food & Beverage Unit of the French Consulate in Shanghai, China. As a young, white French man, I was constantly stared at, but also the object of exotifying Occidentalist discourses. These comments took particular salience given the quintessential romanticism French people are assumed to represent, and that—with my blond hair and blue eyes—I appeared to embody. This reflection about my own positionality in China led me to interrogate the Occidentalist representations that appeared prevalent among Shanghai's urban middle-class.

Following my fieldwork in Shanghai, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight young Chinese female professionals living in first-tier cities, and belonging to China's Francophile/Francophone cultural diaspora. I also interviewed two experts of the food and wine industry in China. Finally, I undertook a digital ethnography to examine food photography on the social media WeChat.

Reading the academic literature published in the 1990s and early 2000s was an immersion in China's amused discovery of Western capitalist 'modernity'. The opening of McDonalds and KFC in China in the wake of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in the late 1980s drew a lot attention from Chinese socialist market economy. Contrary to French sociologist Bourdieu's theories, which assumed that consumption patterns were tied to dynamics of social distinction, eating Western food in China seemed more aspirational than an actual marker of social positioning. In the 1990s, going to fast food outlets in Chinese coastal cities was largely not about the taste, but

rather, a unique way of experiencing exoticism. White-collar professionals, urban yuppies (*xiaozi*) and children have been the most likely to engage in these trends. Through their patterns of consumption, they have progressively domesticated this capitalist globalization.

The informants I spoke with, born in the 1980-1990s, are the "little emperors" who grew up in the wake of Deng Xiao Ping's economic reforms. Because they have studied and worked temporarily in the West, they have been navigating this Western modernity throughout their lives. I was interested in exploring how they qualified their current consumption of Western food and what it meant to them. This was especially interesting as little has been written on that topic since the early 2000s.

In interviews, my informants' representations of the West are still embedded in largely Occidentalist discourses, though they are sometimes nuanced with concerns about the detrimental impact of Western development. This new generation has been renewing dynamics of social distinction associated with the consumption of Western food. Behind the "atmosphere" of Western restaurants they praise, it appears that they seek to cultivate a refined middle-class culture. Female informants are searching for healthy and non-mainstream foodways, while longing for authenticity—displaying their food cultural capital, and a highly reflexive relationship to WeChat postings. I suggest that these food patterns contribute to the invention of a post-socialist, post-colonial, transnationally-connected Chinese urban femininity.

Ultimately, this work sheds light on the rise of a transnationally-connected Chinese upper middle-class in Chinese coastal cities, and offers some food for thought for future anthropological research into the new social and digital dynamics in the 21st century Middle Empire.

Rave culture and ecstasy: A journey of affect and unity towards spiritual healing

Awarded 'Best Publication'

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to explore the importance of affect theory in rave culture. Through the deconstruction of rave culture, ecstasy, and spiritual experiences, I examine the roles of Victor Turner's (1969) "communitas" and Hutson's "spiritual journey" (Hutson 1999; Hutson 2000) as they relate to affect theory. The study includes a literature review and research conducted on rave community Reddit forums. It analyzes rave-goers' stories of affective experiences (which pertain to spiritual healing), and illuminates how affect theory can be employed to analyze and improve individual and societal well-being through cultural experiences of unity. This analysis concludes that spiritual healing occurs within rave culture via the collective experiences of love, acceptance, and connectedness that are evoked through altered states of consciousness.

Introduction

Rave scenes are well known for their use of electronic music, as well as experiences of collective unity, religious undertones, and drug consumption (Gauthier 2004). Scholars have identified spiritual healing in rave culture as a journey, linked by communitas and feelings of nostalgia for the potentiality of a future paradise (Huston 2000; Takahashi & Olaveson 2003). In this instance, it is useful to cite Skoggard and Waterston's definition of affect: the relationship between the mind and body which refers to both individual and collective feelings, desires, and intentions (2015: 111-112). This notion of affect can explain how rave cultures are able induce experiences of spiritual healing, and will be further discussed in this article. As Skoggard and Waterston astutely note: "feelings… are an integral part of human consciousness …hunches and intuition play a major role in reasoning, and passion provides impetus for action" (2015: 111). I propose that spiritual healing is made possible within rave culture due to collective and individual experiences of love, acceptance, and connectedness, which are evoked through altered states of consciousness.

Methodology

The analysis of anthropological and sociological literature (see Victor Turner and Émile Durkheim) was essential when conducting my research on rave culture, altered states of consciousness, and affect. These ethnographies were conducted in various geographic contexts which defined rave culture as a culture of music, partying, and involved altered states of consciousness, spirituality or religiosity. Testimonials shared publicly on Reddit threads served as a contemporary source in order to better understand individual experiences. The research

was guided by questions such as: How have religious identities emerged within secular activities such as raves? What role does emotion play in spiritual healing, through participation in rave culture? What role does the unified collective play in evoking affect? Finally, I sought to explore the relationship between affect, healing, and altered states of consciousness as it pertained to rave culture.

History

The technical—and most common—definition of a rave is an all-night dance party charged by techno music, often with underground origins, and illegal practices which include illicit drug consumption (Huston 1999: 53). From a more modern perspective, raves have been conceptualized as a "reconfigured time-space…[with] all senses blurred and heightened… the rave experience is that of intense un-focussing, confusion and dis-orientation" (Gauthier 2004: 406). In other words, raves are an experience of altered time and reality, created through the physical environment, and collectively deemed sacred. One's sense of time is lost, the boundaries between the self and the collective become disjointed, and the experience of the rave adopts a sacred quality.

The history of a utopian-oriented music scene is often traced to the free (music) festivals which took place in Britain during the 1970s (Partridge 2006: 43). The free festival scene continued into the 1980s, followed by the emergence of rave culture in the 1990s (Partridge 2006: 45). During the 1970s, the experience of ecstatic trance-dance developed as a characteristic of rave culture (Partridge 2006: 49). In rave scenes, the DJ played the role of 'technoshaman', and through this role, would control the flow of collective thought and mood (Huston 2000: 38). At the heart of rave culture in the 1990s, one could find Ecstasy (MDMA), which was popular for its ecstatic and transcendent inducing properties (Partridge 2006: 52).

The historical legacy of rave culture includes feelings of love and unity, which arise from, and create affective experiences. In an article exploring the psychoactive substance Ecstasy, Leneghan describes the experiences of peace, love, understanding, and respect (PLUR) which emerge as a result of its consumption (2013). During his ethnographic study on rave culture in Australia, he observed that one may attain a pleasurable, altered state of consciousness through the use of the drug (2013: 351). This state has been referred to as 'plurring' and involves strong feelings of connection, synchronicity, and love (2013: 351). The experience of PLUR was also documented as unifying Ecstasy users, though longer term users felt that they eventually lost this experience (Leneghan 2013: 351). While scholars acknowledge that psychoactive drug use is often essential to initially embarking on this PLUR experience, after a period of time, drugs are a secondary means to achieving ecstatic states (Takahashi & Olaveson 2003: 79). This suggests that other factors, such as the affective experience of the rave itself, evoke ecstatic experiences.

Takahashi and Olaveson find five major themes which characterize rave culture, and promote affective experiences. These themes include connectedness, embodiment, and altered states of consciousness, and relate to the multitude of experiences and feelings of one-ness,

meaning, and euphoria which are reported characteristics of the rave experience (Takahashi & Olaveson 2003; Hutson 1999; Hutson 2000; Leneghan 2013). A critical aspect of Takahashi & Olaveson's work is the recognition of the role played by altered states of consciousness. Altered states of consciousness refer to the manipulation of the body in specific ways through movement, breath, and sensory experiences such as repetitive auditory or visual stimuli (Takahashi & Olaveson 2003: 82). Such stimuli are often present in the rave environment, including strobe lights, music, the DJ, and dance. As the authors note, altered states of consciousness are integral to induce transcendent, enlightening, and euphoric states (Takahashi & Olaveson 2003: 83).

The last two critical themes identified in rave culture are spirituality, and personal transformation. As Takahashi and Olaveson observe, spirituality is distinguished from religion in that it does not "[identify] with particular theological beliefs and practices specific to a religious institution" (Takahashi & Olaveson 2003: 84). This distinction is important as Takahashi and Olaveson suggest the establishment of rave culture was likely accelerated by its underlying spiritual experiences (2003: 85). Thus, with this understanding of rave culture as a free-festival born movement and spiritual experience leading to altered states of consciousness, we can discuss the links between affect, ecstatic states, and spirituality.

Raves, affect, and ecstatic experiences

To gain deeper insight into the role of affect in rave culture, I conducted an online ethnographic study upon Reddit users' experiences at raves. Notably, many Reddit threads discussed topics of spirituality and religion as it related to the ecstatic experience of the rave. These narratives tended to mention space feeling larger than life, feelings of unity and one-ness, the DJ's guidance, and sentiments of immense love and acceptance for one another (Reddit: Survey on Raves and Spirituality 2015). From these accounts, one can observe the importance of affect, spirituality, and unity in rave-goers' attempts to make meaning of their experiences. One Reddit user differentiated between spirituality and religion, describing raves as "the sense of togetherness and sincere wish for everyone to be happy that comes from dancing together, [it] is [an] almost spiritual [experience]" (Reddit: Survey on Raves and Spirituality 2015). This account is in agreement with scholarly observations regarding spirituality and religion in rave culture (see Takahashi & Olaveson 2013). In addition to the experiences of spirituality, rave-goers described their attendance as leading to personal transformation. The spiritual experience and trance-like states can be interpreted as guiding individuals towards a place of spiritual healing. Therefore, it appears that collectively experiencing feelings such as love, joy, and intimacy coincide with the ecstatic rave experience.

Communitas, affect, and healing

Raves are often understood as underground parties where congregations of people search for an otherly ecstatic experience. These groups of dancers and party goers can be said to

be occupying a characteristically liminal way of being. Liminality, in this sense, is drawn from Victor Turner's definition of the liminal personae, a threshold wherein people exist ambiguously and slip through networks of classification typically found within cultural spaces (1969: 327). Liminality exists in the rave scene as its occupants behave and experience the culture collectively, defying classification. This phenomenon of liminality within rave culture establishes a place for communitas. Communitas are conceptualized as a place where lowliness and sacredness blend for connection and unity to occur (Turner 1969: 328). These qualities proffer a spiritual feeling to the rave scene, both in a metaphysical sense and within the concrete space. This spirituality is achieved through the music, dance, lighting, ecstatic experience, and guidance of the DJ. The idea behind communitas is to recognize a human bond (Turner 1969: 328). Simply put, communitas stems from the inquiry into human connection and unity, both states which arise through and within affective experiences. This bond speaks to the salience of affect among ravers, and offers an explanation for its being.

To extend Turner's notion of communitas to rave culture, I explore Kavanaugh and Anderson's studies of solidarity and drug use in dance music scenes (2008). In their ethnographic research, the authors define solidarity as a type of integration within a social group which concerns one's personal attachments and emotional bonds within, and towards, the group (2008: 184). The authors note that solidarity within the rave scene is best understood through the lens of collective identity (Kavanaugh & Anderson 2008: 185). I suggest it is with personal choice and preference through which communitas are built, and solidarity grows. Research conducted by Kavanaugh and Anderson in Philadelphia's rave scene revealed an important dimension of solidarity: the social-affective solidarity (2008: 188). From this perspective, social-affective solidarity formed primarily through socialization within rave scenes, and this type of solidarity was found stronger among those who reported higher levels of engagement within the rave scene (Kavanaugh & Anderson 2008: 188). Notably, affectively salient relationships were experienced regardless of whether an individual had used drugs. In many cases, members of the Philadelphia rave scene referred to drug use as an enhancement of one's experience, rather than a necessary requirement to achieve affective solidarity (Kavanaugh & Anderson 2008: 189). This affective experience of solidarity without illicit substances was similarly described across Reddit forums, and indicates the importance of forming connections within the rave scene. Thus, solidarity and communitas appear to be important factors in establishing collective ecstatic experiences.

Importantly, Émile Durkheim argues that religious representations are expressions of collective realities (Durkheim 1995 [1912]: 38). This understanding of religion can be extended to describe the experience of rave culture, in that raves often hold religious and spiritual connotations for its participants through a reality established by communitas. Durkheim observes that the "believer" is one who has learned to act to live, gaining strength from this experience (1995 [1912]: 45). This idea reflects the spiritual healing and ecstatic experience reported by rave-goers, involving reclamation of strength and life through healing. Here, the notion of affect, as it refers to the senses of the collective unconscious and conscious (Waterston 2015: 112), is beneficial to this understanding of spiritual healing in rave culture. Moreover, I

propose that these moments of spiritual healing reflect affective experiences in rave culture. Affect is essential to conceptualizations of rave culture, as this theory invokes the importance of both collective and individual experiences, while speaking to the emotional nature of raves. As previously observed in Reddit forums, the ecstatic experiences in raves can be seen alongside altered states of consciousness produced within communitas.

Experiences of community, solidarity, and affect culminate towards a cultural atmosphere of spiritual healing (Hutson, 1999). Essentially, raves are a form of socially produced spiritual healing in which the DJ acts as a shaman (Hutson 1999: 53-54). Interviews revealed that ravers believe the rave scene is a more direct form of spirituality than organized religion (Hutson, 1999: 61). As part of this spiritual experience, the DJ has the ability to to use ecstatic techniques to drive the community towards emotional experiences which transcend reality (Huston 1999: 61). For instance, they can guide ravers through the use of symbols such as lights and lasers, towards ecstatic experiences of spiritual healing (Hutson 1999: 53-54). Thus, ecstatic experiences, or spiritual healing, are evoked through symbolic means, as well as through shared collective experiences. Huston argues that the DJ is able to fulfill this role by their control over the music, and the presence of rhythmic lighting, lasers, and dance (1999: 62). With the combination of the rave's therapeutic environment, and guidance of the DJ, ravers are frequently able to attain ecstatic states, and engage in a framework of spiritual healing (Huston 1999: 63).

Conclusion

The journey of collectivism and unity evoke feelings of love, spirituality, and ecstatic states to guide individuals towards spiritual healing. While drugs are often part of this journey, they are by no means necessary. Building communitas and solidarity make these spaces safe and allow for strong feelings of love and one-ness to overcome the individual. In these instances and beyond, the spiritual experience of raves conducted by the DJ allows for Hutson's concept of spiritual healing (1999). I suggest that future scholarly inquiries focus on the role of affect in and beyond rave culture, because as in this case, affect appears to be a factor in fostering healing. Furthermore, this illuminates important questions for anthropological inquiry, such as: What is the importance of love in community building and healing? How does love or the PLUR experience shape human experiences? I wish to conclude with the idea that there is much to be explored in the realm of affect and healing, within and extending beyond rave culture. Affect theory provides insight into the importance of community in relation to psychological well-being at both the societal and individual level.

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The Parti des Indigènes de la République and homonationalism: An ethnographic analysis of an activist neocolonial critique of homonationalism in the French Republican context.

Nicolas El Haïk-Wagner

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Abstract: Although observed less frequently than in other European countries, homonationalism has surged in recent years in the discourse of the French far-right party Front National (Faye 2016), as well as, in more implicit ways, in the discourse and practices of some LGBTQI organizations (Dard-Dascot 2012). This paper offers a critical analysis of the position of the French anti-racist and decolonial political movement "Parti des Indigènes de la République" (PIR) regarding 'homoracialism' in light of existing ethnographic studies and questions the intersection of academic and activist discourses while while raising ethical questions on contemporary social justice struggles. I argue that the organization proposes a decolonial critique of the Western universalistic and homonationalist discourse, as well as of its links with a white capitalist queer biopolitical project and a colonial orientalist thinking. This critique is articulated in the context of a French Republican system failing to meet its promise of socio-economic and national integration of post-colonial immigration subjects, while remaining overall colorblind and indifferent to differences, while the PIR develops a moralizing, dichotomous and homogenizing analysis of structural racial inequalities, which is problematically resorted to implicitly justify homophobia. The singular path towards identity construction for racially and sexually marginalized post-colonial immigration outlined neglects the complex, uneasy although substantial, margin of autonomy these individuals have in reconciling family, community and personal expectations' vis-à-vis their sexuality.

Introduction

Homonationalism has become increasingly divsisive within the feminist and queer academic and activist world. A concept coined by queer theorist Puar in 2007, it refers to both the increasing state-sponsored narrative, and ethnocentric sentiments of parts of the LGBTQI community, whose promotion of Western liberal gay rights as the one and only universal path to follow might sometimes turn into a neocolonial attempt to deny cultural relativism, or even consider sexual norms in the non-Western world as archaic. Drawing on the work of Foucault and Deleuze, Puar considers homonationalism:

> an assemblage of geopolitical and historical forces, neoliberal interests in capitalist accumulation both cultural and material, biopolitical state practices of population control, and affective investments in discourses of freedom, liberation, and rights. [...]. It is a facet of modernity, and a historical shift marked by the entrance of (some) homosexual bodies as worthy of protection by nation-states." (2013: 337).

In France, homonationalism has been less frequently observed in the political discourse, especially given the conservative positions of right-wing parties regarding same-sex marriage (Brustier 2014). It has, however, surged in recent years, especially in the discourse of the far-right party Front National (Faye 2016), as well as, in more implicit ways, in the discourse and practices of LGBTQI organizations (Dard-Dascot 2012).

I focus here on a denunciation of homonationalism by the French anti-racist and decolonial political movement "Parti des Indigènes de la République" (PIR). Conceived in 2005, this organization was created by intellectuals and activists working in the field of immigration, and aims at combating racial inequalities. Using the the self-identified cateogory of 'indigènes' […] to point at a denial of full citizen's rights through religious, ethnic or racial identifications" (Zobel 2010: 54), the PIR has become one of the most publicized and controversial importers of post-colonial theory in France, and has been accused of developing racialist, antifeminist, homophobic and anti-Semitic positions. It is thus interesting to look at their discursive production regarding homonationalism, and to reinscribe it theoretically while pointing to their contradictions and essentialist arguments through a review of contemporary ethnographies which stress the peculiarities of the French context. My primary source throughout this paper is a statement by one of the spokesperson of the organization, Houria Bouteldja, entitled "On the strategic importance of temporal discordances: Gay universalism, homoracialism and 'marriage for all'", which was published in February 2013, and written during nation-wide debates on same-sex marriage. These debates have indeed, intensely challenged a colorblind, universalistic French republicanism, which is the result of the historical formation of the French nation-state around a unique and singular identity and language. Any form of particularism—be it regional, ethnic, or racial—is therefore considered a threat to the unity of the nation (Macé 2006).

My argument is the following; Bouteldja offers a decolonial critique of the Western universalistic and homonationalist discourse, as well as of its links with a white capitalist queer biopolitical project, and a colonial orientalist thinking. This critique is articulated in the context of a French Republican system which is failing to meet its promise of socio-economic and national integration of post-colonial immigration subjects, such as youth of North African descent, while insisting on a policy of "colourblindness" to racial differences. However, Bouteldja develops a moralizing, dichotomous and homogenizing analysis of structural racial inequalities, which is problematically resorted to implicitly justify homophobia. The singular path towards identity construction for racially and sexually marginalized, post-colonial immigration neglects the complex, uneasy, margin of autonomy that these individuals have in reconciling family, community and personal expectations' vis-à-vis their sexuality.

A critique of the imperialist and universalistic tendencies of white sexual democracy

The PIR develops a criticism of the imperialist and universalistic tendencies of white sexual democracy (Fassin 2006). Bouteldja claims that the PIR's "posture distinguishes itself from the Western gay movement as it denies any ambition and discredits the assumption of a transnational gay and lesbian political identity" (2013). The statement offers an underlying denunciation of the Western coercive impulse towards politics of visibility, a supposedly necessary political subjectification of homosexual individuals. Bouteldja's main underlying claim is that this politics of visibility "constitute and sanction progressive and privileged (white) queer, lesbian and gays subjects" (Cervulle and Puar 2013: 153). As she asserts, "there is a choice inscribed in the hegemonic homosexual activism: that between pride and shame, between the closet and the coming out" (Bouteldja 2013), which, she continues, neglects the others ways non-white individuals may have to make sense of homosexual practices. In her eyes, homonationalism subdues any intersectional reading of the historical hierarchies of power existing between white and nonwhite individuals, and therefore entrenches them. Here, one is reminded of Puar's claim that "sexual exceptionalism works at dissimulating the control it exerts on the frontiers of the acceptable gender, race and class formations. In other words, (homo)sexual exceptionalism does not contradict or undermine (hetero)sexual exceptionalism. On the contrary, it can support heteronormativity and the privileges of class, race and citizenship on which it relies" (2013: 158).

Although Bouteldja does not entirely develop this theoretical engagement, one should stress that Puar conceives this white, queer, normative position as nothing else than a biopolitical project seeking to define, regulate and produce liberated queer subjects. This makes an ideal of liberation (from norms) becoming an entrenched normative injunction to be liberated and transgressive, while "[resting] upon the exclusion of those immediately defined as not free in the same way" (Ahmed 2005: 151-2). In this biopolitical project, "the definition of this queer position as necessarily and intrinsically transgressive produces specific forms of discipline and control, celebrates progressive subjects offered to life (*queer* as subject) against sexually pathologic and deviant populations offered to death (*queer* as population)" (Cervulle and Puar 2013: 169). As such, a normative and regulatory queer position may become an alibi to "multiple complicities with other identity norms, such as national, racial, class or gender identities, thereby falling despite itself in the trap of the hegemony of whiteness" (Cervulle and Puar 2013: 169). However, Bouteldja adds a moral and racially binary position to the argument, as she claims that a non-white individual aligning with the Western homosexual agenda becomes complicit with the hegemonic whiteness and its historical oppression of non-white populations, and appears as a traitor. The difference is clear and must be emphasized between stating, as Puar does, that this biopolitical project "erases any possible queer alliance beyond class, race and citizenship" (2013: 174), and ideologically layers a singular praxis, which denies any margin of agency to racialized individual having non-heterosexual practices. Would, for instance, the

political subjectification of a non-white, self-identified homosexual necessarily be an evidence of his "white-washedness", and should it be, as a consequence, rejected? This seems underlying in Bouteldja's argument, and it must be strongly rejected. I would argue that, as oppressive, and sometimes neocolonial as Western politics of visibility can be for some individuals, their liberating dimension for others needs to be similarly emphasized.

A denunciation of the exotic and orientalist tendencies of homonationalism as a biopolitical project

The binarism of heterosexuality/homosexuality was not only imposed in territories where it didn't exist, but was even polarized; the representations conveyed by the Western world by orientalism have durably shaped the conversation about sexuality among Arab intellectuals. […] For Western thinkers, modernity for the Arab nation was also a sexual modernity. Moving towards progress also meant civilizing Arab sexuality, making heterosexual practices—the only legitimate ones in the eyes of Europeans—the norm of their societies [Bouteldja 2013].

The argument here is that colonial societies have always been denied their specific, and oftentimes more fluid, sexual practices and gender constructions because of imperialist colonial attempts to define what were deemed "normal" and "modern" practices. Bouteldja claims that while the existing homosexual practices have been historically denounced as decadent and regressive by the heteronormative attitude of colonial authorities, the current sexual practices of the Middle and Near East, which are the very historical product of colonization, are nowadays considered archaic by Western societies. Hence, in her words, homonationalism is nothing but an umpteenth attempt of colonial societies to shape and define what sexuality should look like in non-Western cultures, and therefore should be resisted. As she elaborates, "it is likely that behind the virulent criticism of the International gay (which I acknowledge) there can be a true preoccupation for the protection and integrity of sexual practices threatened by a Western-centered order" (Bouteldja 2013). By doing so, Bouteldja inscribes her thought in that of Said (1978), famous for his deconstruction of the imperialist ideological rhetoric which Orientalism has been, considering non-Western societies as timeless, ahistorical and driven by chaos. Rebucini (2013) emphasizes the intrinsic paradoxes of this culturalist and orientalist rhetoric, which has created a hierarchy sustaining current global inequalities. As he develops,

On the one side, the Orient would be the place of sexual repression, of shame and repression vis-à-vis queer sexuality, of homophobia and sexism; on the other side it would be the place of an unbridled sexuality. This orientalist paradox feeds, in this way, a vision of the Orient and of the Muslims as particularly sensitive to sexuality, in opposition to a Western culture which is considered as having a more mature and thought-of relationship towards sexuality [Rebucini 2013: 84].

Although Bouteldja's use of the term "homoracialism", instead of homonationalism, acknowledges the specific latent orientalist and racist features of French sexual democracy, she

barely discusses these, and I think some further context must be provided. Sekuler (2013) highlights that state-sponsored homonationalist discourse in France tends to be constructed around a specific racist and orientalist process of othering which excludes the Arab Muslim man. As he develops, this discourse must be understood as "an effort to re-imagine France as a harbinger of human rights around gender identity and sexual orientation [...] [at] a socio-historic moment in contemporary France where nationalism and a fear of migrants and Islam have gained a public stage and increased legal backing" (Sekuler 2013: 15-16). In this context, a distinction is operated between white heteronormative and homonormative bodies and a "a racialized abject 'other' who is understood to be usually heterosexual and non-trans, rarely homosexual and/or transgender, but always at once a victim of orientalized backwardness and a threat to French modernity" (Sekuler 2013: 15-16). In other words, while US homonationalism has constructed itself against the figure of the racialized terrorist (Puar 2007), the "violent Muslim Arab man", supposedly homophobic and sexually harassing his wife, appears to be the main scapegoat of French homonationalist discourse. This deep racialized and racist fear has been put forward to explain the increasing vote of homosexuals in France for the far-right party Front National (Faye 2016). This also highlights how, although "the politicization of sexual questions has been intrinsically linked to that of racial questions" (Fassin 2006: 241). To quote Fassin, "democratic modernity clearly becomes a double-edged language of power: sexual emancipation builds itself on racial relegation" (2006: 241). As such, it is interesting to note the specific form this paradoxical Orientalist thinking takes in the French context. Birnbaum claims that the homonationalist discourse in France relies on a "double exoticization of homophobia, both within and outside the national frontiers. In other words, homophobia would nowadays be circumscribed to so-called "barbaric" zones: the Muslim Arab world and our cities' suburbs" (2012). This strengthens the queer biopolitical project, as it makes "the denunciation of homophobia in communities of origin appear way more urgent, and as needing to get the upper hand over the denunciation of racism within hegemonic queer communities" (Cervulle and Puar 2013: 163).

A condemnation of the failed promises of the French "colourblind" Republican model of integration

The PIR denounces between the lines the failure of a French colorblind model, which, Bouteldja asserts, fails to fulfill its promise of national and socio-economic integration. Bouteldja argues that "in our history, imperialism, colonialism, racism and the global confrontation with the white and Eurocentric Republican system have finished to withdraw any belief we might have had on this paradigm of progress" (2013). First, she denounces the embeddedness of the model of heterosexual family in the Republican system of integration. Here lies a paradox, in her opinion, since this model, she claims, remains "the desirable horizon for non-whites in France" (Bouteldja 2013). This stands in contradiction with the progressive paradigm of gender and family norms promoted by homonationalism. This schizophrenia appears inherent to homonationalism, a system within which (homonormative) homosexual bodies become incorporated in the (heteronormative) national imagined community, to use Anderson's (1983) terms. As such, these bodies become the embodiment of Western

progressiveness vis-à-vis the non-Western world, while still being discriminated at the national-level. Drawing on a neo-Marxist thought, Bouteldja also emphasizes the failures of the Republican model in terms of socio-economic integration. She considers that the decline of the welfare state, one of the main promises of French Republic, is responsible for the socio-economic marginalization of racialized minorities and suggests that their socio-economic oppression is so strong that they are unlikely to engage in political identity struggles.

A problematic homogenizing reading of white and non-white populations' norms and political values

What is striking in the discourse of the PIR is the prevalence of a race-based analysis, and of a strong racial dichotomy dividing the society between supposedly homogenous white and non-white populations. This interpretive framework is problematic since it creates a hierarchy contrary to the theories of intersectionality. Although the racial question has become at the heart of French public debate (Fassin 2006), it is very rarely discussed in these terms. The use of the notion of "race" as a social construct, be it activist and institutional discourses combating racism, as well as in the discourse of antiracist political groups, is indeed frequently disqualified and considered illegitimate (Devriendt, Monte and Sandré 2018). Examining the inexistence of ethnic or racial statistics in French social sciences, Simon attributes these controversies to the "Republican motto of an "indifference to differences" and to a willingness to make cultural disparities less projecting so to unify the nation" (2008: 153-4). This context informs the recurring polemics that arise about the positions of the PIR. Bouteldja attributes these to the fact that "their thought disrupts the categories within which the left and all its components are used to think about the real, about politics and about power struggles" (Nadi 2017). I argue, however, that although Bouteldja claims not to "[undertake] a substitution of the social question by the racial question, but rather a crossing, an intersection" (Bantigny *et al.* 2017), her analysis is tinged with homogenizing, not to say sometimes essentialist, conceptions of race, and with an implicit hierarchy of struggles which is contrary to the philosophy of intersectionality. A clear distinction must indeed be made between denouncing the systemic aspect of white privilege and homogenizing the French society as being composed of one homogenous group ("the Whites"). Within it, the only dividing line Bouteldja seems to observe regards the "progressiveness" of one's political opinions. This reading appears to deny all the other factors (gender, socio-economic status, etc.) which must be included in an analysis of white privilege (Kebaza 2006: 150). As an example, when Bouteldja advocates that a decolonial position considers "homosexuals not as baby seals [referring here to a French popular metaphoric expression, not denied of latent homophobia, equating homosexuals with seals] or an endangered species one should protect or despise, but as social subjects" (2013), she blurs any intersectional reading of the position of homosexual individuals, as she implicitly assumes that that their whiteness is a privilege which is superior to the discrimination they may suffer from as a result of their sexuality. Creating such hierarchies of oppression and denying the oppression white individuals may face in spite of their white privilege is inconsistent with the rest of her argument. This homogenizing perspective appears even stronger in her call-to-action to non-white people, which she calls "indigènes". "Indigènes" should here be understood as "a

legal category designating the subjects of colonial domination, within the context of the contemporary French political order", a domination which in contemporary times is associated with "various forms of political, legal, social, cultural and religious discrimination" (Zobel 2010: 52-53). If she acknowledges twice that "indigènes" may or may not be organized – that is racially self-conscious and prone to engage in a struggle against neo colonial forms of oppression - she tends to assume that the indigènes' society is a single unified entity and is quick to oppose it to white Western societies (assumingly homogeneous and individualistic).

Later, Bouteldja asserts that the priority of neocolonial subjects should be "the reconstitution of a community social cohesion around broken identities, retracted but considered ours and authentic" (2013). This advocacy does not come without consequences with regards to sexual discriminations, since she implicitly assumes that the priority of the decolonial struggle might have consequences on the short-run, for those suffering from sexual discriminations (i.e. racialized homosexual individuals or racialized individuals having homosexual practices). Faced on the one side with socio-economic marginalization (as post-colonial immigration subjects), and on the other side with the coercive politics of visibility which Western societies compel them to, these individuals, according to Bouteldja, are but faced with three options. These include "family, community or geographical departure, if they can afford it […], submission to the heterosexual marriage, accompanied with a great affective precarity, or marriage with a homosexual from the opposite sex" (Bouteldja 2013). Lines are blurred here between what could be deemed a sociological description of their situation and Bouteldja's stance as an activist. Although acknowledging that these options are not satisfying, she considers the situation unavoidable and fails to recognize the margin of autonomy individuals may have to reconcile conflicting expectations. Outlining alternative perspectives to these three normative ones would probably contradict the hierarchy of struggles she establishes when considering the primacy of the neocolonial one (which she labels "peace among *indigènes*").

An ambiguous analysis of the roots of homophobic attitudes within formerly colonized societies and French racialized minorities

This essentialization of racial features is also resorted to by Bouteldja to propose a dangerously ambiguous analysis of the roots of homophobia. This analysis has a clear ideological bias, and needs to be reconsidered and nuanced through a consideration of ethnographic works. Bouteldja argues that "the injunctions of the white world and the violence, as much symbolic as political, which accompanies them produce homophobia. […] To the international gay, the societies of the global South respond with a secretion of hatred against homosexuals which did not used to exist or with a revival of homophobia where it already used to exist" (2013). The existing academic literature examining attitudes regarding homosexuality in former colonized African countries invites us to refine the mechanical causality Bouteldja develops, a causality which seems to deny individuals any sense of responsibility. Recognizing the influence of American evangelical movements seeking to impose their anti-gay agenda

(Cheney 2012) and the anthropological literature emphasizes the existence of homosexuality in pre-colonial Africa (Murray 1998), anti-homosexuality sentiments must be understood, not only in a reaction against Western imperialism, but also as a more general reaction to the rapid socio-cultural change brought by neoliberal capitalist globalization (Cheney 2012; Vorhölter 2017).

The prevalence of Bourdieusian identity politics within French suburban cities

Bouteldja also suggests a straightforward causality between homonationalism and increasing homophobic sentiments in French suburban cities, explaining that "working-class neighborhoods respond to homoracialism through an identity virilism… and always more homophobia" (2013). This statement must again be nuanced in light of existing ethnographic works. First, a number of scholars have stressed how homosexuality is frequently the "perceived danger that so often accompanies Western male homosociality" (Cameron 1998: 209). In the specific context of France, and in a pioneering study, Mauger and Poliak suggested that the "valorization of physical strength" may be correlated with the fact that, for at least a fraction of these underprivileged youths, it constitutes the only capital they are able to oppose, the only property they can rely on so to define themselves" (1983: 65). When it comes to homophobia, they claim that "if homosexuals have been and may still be one of the preferred targets of *loubards*, it is not that much the sign of 'repressed homosexual impulses', but rather because, in the eyes of *loubards*, they represented the cultural, financial and clothing pretension, as well as the sexual negation of virility" (Mauger and Poliak 1983: 65). In this implicit Bourdieusian identity politics, race might play a role and the universalistic rhetoric of homonationalism might reinforce the feeling of alienation of these disadvantaged youths vis-à-vis white higher social classes, who appear to endorse a greater fluidity of gender norms. Thus, it appears that class dynamics, neglected by Bouteldja, are closely intertwined with this latent homophobia. More problematically, Bouteldja later claims that homophobia must be considered as an evidence of marginalized communities' will to "integrate themselves and resist" (2013). Asserting that homophobia is driven by "a fierce resistance to white and Western imperialism and to a stubborn willingness to preserve a real or fantasized identity", she barely seems to condemn it, solely underlying its "ugliness" (Bouteldja 2013). Lines between a sociological analysis and a single-agenda decolonial activism appear blurred. One can but lament Bouteldja's hesitation between providing hypotheses to interpret a phenomenon—mentioning macro and micro-structural factors to explain this rising homophobia—and excusing it, stating that because of the mentioned factors, and following a hyper-deterministic approach, the behavior of these individuals may not be condemned. This ambiguous position was severely denounced, especially since some elements of this statement were taken back out (with little mention of their context) following the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting, creating the conditions for a controversy to occur. A columnist claimed that "in the weird system of Bouteldja, homosexuality is hateful, since it is the armed wing of the neocolonial Republic. […] Fighting against the homosexual (be it within oneself or vis-à-vis others) implies delivering oneself from the racist

violence of the Republican pact, this new *Code de l'indigénat.* Bashing fags, that is the way decolonization works, that is the way one can break its chains" (Pliskin 2016).

A lack of consideration for the limited margins of agency racialized individuals in France may have in reconciling conflicting expectations

Finally, the PIR's advocacy barely touches upon the concrete modalities of identity construction of these individuals. It seems crucial to stress that, beyond the constraints posed by historical and socio-economic structures, individuals nevertheless keep some margin of agency in finding their way(s) of negotiating with these structures and discourses while not breaking ties with their community. My point here is not to romanticize or idealize the agency of these individuals in reconciling conflicting expectations. Rather, I want to emphasize the emotional difficulties they may have, which Amaria termed their "divided loyalties" (2012: 56). The latter exist both at a micro level, negotiating the expectations of their family and their sexual and racial identity, and at a macro level, negotiating between the Western society's politics of visibility and their racial, ethnic or cultural community's own politics, which tend to promote more intimacy. Navigating these conflicting expectations and personal ethics is an uncertain, ongoing, and constantly evolving process for these individuals. If Bouteldja states that her definitive goal is to "respect ourselves [us being the "indigènes"] and our relationship to the world, while refusing to cede to the white world in its attempt to universalize LGBT identities or in its European neoconservative, hetero-patriarchal and Christian form" (2013), she does not elaborate on the potentially harmful implications of such a positioning for racialized individuals having non-heterosexual practices. She solely recognizes towards the end that her intent in the long-run intent is to "let non-white people having homo-erotic practices the possibility to reconcile their private and public lives, their emotional relationships as well as their family solidarities" (Bouteldja 2013). Although homo-erotic practices are part of the range of erotic and sexual practices of postcolonial immigration subjects, one could but lament the reduction, in this statement, of their sexuality to these practices. A number of recent ethnographies have emphasized the diversity of their erotic and sexual practices as well as the processes through which individuals strive to reconcile these "divided loyalties". Mack (2017) argues that "some behaviors of French Arab men, which from the outside can be perceive as an exception to the heterosexual rule, are in fact quite widespread [...]: homosocial affection (which sometimes, though not always, blends with homosexuality), bisexuality, or an emotional and sexual relationship with transsexual people" (2017). These practices, he contends, should be labeled as "pro-regressive", such an apparent oxymoron implying that these practices seek to subtract to the white queer biopolitical project and its necessary politics of visibility, to both homo-and hetero-normativity "which nowadays are synonymous with national assimilation" (Mack 2017), but also to the rigid forms of social control in French urban communities. He argues indeed that these "people opt do not submit to the 'coming out' imperative, not because of a retrograde culture which would hold them back" (Mack 2017) but rather for reasons which have to do with the density of urban life and the impact of the state of surveillance. Activism in racially-specific spaces is another trajectory susceptible to helping these individuals constructing their sexual

and racial identity in non, or less fragmented ways. Following a fieldwork among the Black homosexual activists of the organization Afrique-Arc-En-Ciel, Trawalé (2014) highlights the material and symbolic spaces offered by community activism. These spaces help these Black men creating a sense of ontological security which may constitute a personal prerequisite for accepting or adopting a specific gender and/or sexuality. Given how in "ethnicized spaces (their family, for example), they will appear as the gay; and in homosexual spaces, as Black" (Trawalé 2014: 9), Black gay activism may offer a space to reconcile both these identities, while not standing in a strict opposition to their family.

Inventing a non-homogenizing and decolonial universalism to approach cross-cultural matters of gender and sexuality?

This statement questions very profoundly the ways academic and activist discourses mutually intersect, reinforce or challenge each other, while raising ethical questions on contemporary social justice struggles. I hope to have shown that, as strong as Bouteldja's stance can be in light of the existing anti-capitalist, decolonial academic literature, the underlying binary, homogenizing moralistic connotations of her position are very problematic and contrary to the philosophies of intersectionality. Her statement also tends to neglect the lived experiences of racialized individuals having homoerotic or homosexual practices, and the margins of autonomy. As tiny and emotionally heavy as these may be, the latter have some leeway in reconciling or navigating between their "divided loyalties". How may one reconcile these rising identity politics, which increasingly contest an unsuitable, colorblind, universalistic French Republican model, with a continuing need for social cohesion? May one conceive of a "queer alliance beyond class, race and citizenship" (Cervulle and Puar 2013: 174) that could benefit individuals cross-culturally? Can one reinvent a non-homogenizing universalism, which would consider the legacy of centuries of colonialism and the totalizing risks of Western universalism, and the social constructivism and post-structuralism raised in the XXth century? This renewed universalism would need to be sensitive to difference, to the multiple nexus of affective reactions and lived realities every human has, and to the aspirations of a number of individuals across the world who are seeking to reconcile conflicting expectations regarding their gender and sexuality. These are some of the interrogations one is left with following a critical look at this statement. Answering these questions is beyond the scope of this paper, but I hope, as modest as this hope may be, that this analysis has created some food for thought regarding the sometimes problematic, coercive politics of visibly Western states. This does not mean denying the crucial role they have played, and continue to play, for a tremendous number of individuals with non-mainstream sexualities. Rather, this paper has argued that these state-sponsored politics of visibility may sometimes fall into a white, capitalist and orientalist-normative biopolitical project, which may not fit the lived experiences of the racialized minorities growing up and living in contemporary France.

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Forerunners in Nova Scotia: Cultural anxieties about death and syncretic beliefs of Celtic folklore in Christian communities

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Abstract: This paper explores the popular belief in the supernatural amongst Scottish and Irish populations living in the Maritime provinces of Canada, with a focus on rural Nova Scotia. Forerunner are omens believed to present themselves in visual and/or auditory forms, foretelling an approaching death. The survival of this legend is analysed through the collection of a first-hand account, in combination with memorates and lore from folklorists and scholars. Religious syncretism is discussed in the context of the predominantly Christian belief system of the participants and communities, whom accept the supernatural phenomena despite it not fitting into the binary of "sacred" and "profane". The relationship between supernatural phenomena and human anxieties is also discussed in relation to this syncretic belief, as well as how people living within the geographically and culturally isolated rural communities of Nova Scotia perceive themselves and their own mortality.

Introduction

Forerunners—considered to be the most common supernatural phenomena in Nova Scotia (Creighton 1968, 5)—are a phenomenon addressed with both unease and conviction by my grandmother, Catherine, and many others who have grown up in the small communities scattered across the Maritime provinces. This is understandable, as a forerunner is most commonly experienced as a frightening omen which foretells the impending death of a loved one (Creighton 1957; Davey and MacKinnon 2016; Jamison 1893). Catherine, aged sixty-seven, was born in the town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and raised in the wooded countryside thirty-five miles away with her parents, and three younger siblings. Her parents and grandparents, who were also born and raised in Canada, are of Irish and Scottish descent, as was common in the predominantly United and Baptist population of that region at the time. They had few neighbours in close vicinity, and most people in the area worked in the pulpwood, Christmas tree, and sometimes fishing industries. Her father cut wood, and her grandmother—who also had experiences with the supernatural—worked as a cook in remote logging camps.

A phenomenon of Celtic origin (Creighton 1957; Davey and MacKinnon 2016; Jamison 1893), forerunners are defined by Davey and MacKinnon (2016, 65) as "omen[s], heard or seen, foretelling death and occasionally other events." In this paper, I argue that supernatural phenomena which are not traditionally accepted or acknowledged in Christian belief systems, can still exist as a popular belief through syncretism—despite the nature of forerunners not fitting into the binary of "sacred" and "profane" that the Protestant church ascribes to. This is particularly prominent in the small communities scattered across the Maritime provinces due to their geographic isolation, as well as the high population of people of Celtic descent. Catherine's

own experience with forerunners occurred when she was twelve years old, the summary of which will be provided below.

Memorate summary

Catherine describes Forerunners as events that occur before someone passes away, during which a person will see or hear something that indicates the impending death. Usually, the forerunner is seen in the form of the person who will die, often wearing the clothing that they will wear in their casket. Other times, a forerunner will present itself in the form of a noise, unsettling and distinct in volume, and its lack of perceived cause. This was the case for the forerunner that acted as an omen for the death of Catherine's father. Late one night, during June of 1963, and between three or four o'clock in the morning, she recalled being suddenly woken up—by what she described as an "ungodly sound, like the door was being kicked in." This terrifying, unignorable noise woke Catherine, her mother, and her father. However, her younger siblings, Eve, Patricia, and Doug, remarkably, were not awoken by the sound. When they ran downstairs, they discovered that the bottom of the tin door of their house had completely crumbled, and been kicked in. Her father then walked out around the road about half a mile, to search for any potential causes. As their home was in a rural, forested area it was not likely that someone would be outside at the time—being between thirty-five and forty miles from Antigonish, the closest town. In fact, with only four houses (including their own) in the area, one had to walk or drive half a mile to what Catherine called "the Crossroads", where there was a co-op store. Expecting to find someone needing help after a car accident—as they were common on the dangerous turns—but finding nothing, they returned to bed. Her father was healthy the next morning when he removed and fixed the door, but he became ill within six months of the encounter, and passed away in January. It wasn't until four to six months later, while sitting at the kitchen table with some family members, that Catherine's mother said that the sound and kicked-in door was his forerunner. This was Catherine's only personal encounter with death-related premonitions or forerunners, but she continues to experience feelings and insights of future events—such as knowing that a family member will call her moments before it happens. She also noted that both her mother, and her mother before her, "saw things all the time." Catherine's mother witnessed the forerunner for the death of her own uncle in the form of an apparition of him walking by her, as she was walking to the well for water. She recounts it as the following:

Catherine: Well, she saw her uncle. She was uh, walking to the well to uh, get um, water and her uncle passed her and she said "Hi" to him and uh, he never—he never said anything; he just kept going to the house. She thought he went to the house, and when she come back up from the well he wasn't there, and about four hours later her mom and mad came home and told her that her uncle had passed away.

Brianna: Wow.

Catherine: And when she when she went to the funeral he was dressed exactly the way she saw him walking up the hill.

Documentation of forerunner lore

In Nova Scotia, a commonly held belief is that many signs and omens are consequences of symbolic actions (Jamison 1893). An example of a symbolic action with an extreme repercussion which can be found in Nova Scotian folklore is the notion that if you turn a loaf of bread top crust downward, someone will starve at sea (Jamison 1893, 38). While lore around cause-and-effect is common in Nova Scotia, forerunners are omens to which this system is not applicable. Forerunners, often equated to drokes or taibhs (Davey and MacKinnon 2016), present themselves in a wide variety of forms. Examples of common forerunners include, but are not limited to, birds—particularly when entering a window, as they are considered to be messengers from the Otherworld (Davey and MacKinnon 2016; Fauset 1968)—anomalous balls of light or fire (Creighton 1957; Davey and MacKinnon 2016; Thomas 2007), and pictures or calendars falling from the wall (Creighton 1957). The "three death knocks" at one's door is an example which was experienced firsthand by Creighton (1957, 1) as a forerunner for the death of her brother's wife, who, like Catherine's father, died of an unspecified illness. Additional cases described by Creighton (1957, 19) involve priests hearing the "three death knocks", shortly before being called to a death bed, and display how the belief in pagan supernatural phenomena is not just tolerated, but actually acknowledged and participated in by some of those who identify heavily with the Christian faith. In his collection of Nova Scotian folklore, more examples of forerunners provided by Fauset (1968, 185-188) include occurrences such as lamps breaking when unlit, dreams about white or grey horses, hens crowing, and roosters crowing at night—or in some versions, crowing specifically at midnight. Interestingly, the rooster forerunner is associated with a possible positive alternative; if the rooster crows five minutes before midnight, then the situation which is weighing on the listener will improve (Fauset 1968, 185). This type of potential for resolution is not evident in Catherine's memorate, nor other examples I have seen thus far, but correlates with my observations regarding the lack of an inherently malevolent or benevolent nature to forerunners—despite the fear and dread with which they are understandably met.

Cases I have found in literature about forerunners encountered as sounds—which I find in the context of forerunners, to be a form of clairaudient spiritual divination (Magliocco 2018)—share several elements with Catherine's own story. The lack of apparent cause, unusualness and/or volume of sound was consistently stressed by participants when telling their stories, and resulted in the death of a family member. One of these stories is from an individual whose uncle died on an island while the teller's mother was at their home on the mainland. Earlier in the day, she heard the sound of water falling inside of the house, which they concluded to have been his forerunner (Fauset 1968, 199). A loud and sudden crash, like the forerunner for Catherine's father, is also a forerunner in a story about a quilting party—where the noise interrupted the group's conversation, but could not be attributed to a cause. The teller's niece lived close by, and had heard a noise at the same time, and soon afterwards a man who lived

with her (relationship not specified) died of a stroke (Fauset 1968, 199). The most unique story that I encountered is one in which the forerunner was heard in the form of strikes of a family heirloom grandfather clock (Fauset 1968, 199). What makes this case unique from the others is the fact that the clock was a forerunner of a family member's death on multiple occasions—having struck for the death of the participant's grandfather, grandmother's aunt, and two of the participant's own aunts. For her grandfather, the clock struck sixty-five times soon before the time of his death, at which he was sixty-five years old. For her aunt it struck eighteen times one day, followed by seventeen the next day, totalling to thirty-five times, the equivalent of her age at death. Understandably, the clock was taken apart by the teller's mother to be stored after the tragic occurrences. While these stories have family, sound, and lack of apparent cause in common with Catherine's memorate, throughout all literature I have encountered there have been no strict time parameters between the time a forerunner presents itself to an individual or group, and the time of death; they seem to vary from mere hours, to as far as a year. Cause of death also varies in these stories, but is never directly caused by the forerunner, the implications for which will be discussed in the analysis.

The forerunner for Catherine's mother's uncle—which presented itself in the form of himself walking by her in his funeral clothes—is comparable to some of the stories collected by Creighton (1957). She spoke to a man who provided a memorate of his young adulthood, which occurred while he was with his friend late at night. He asserted both of their sobriety during this encounter, wherein they saw an apparition of a sickly being who looked like a man, but behaved unusually, and did not communicate with them. Overwhelmed by fear, the boys ran away from the being, but were pursued by it—during which it defied the laws of nature through its fast movement. When the boys made it into his friend's home, it leapt to the top of a tall wooden beam where it stood all night, despite the wood being so rotten that the teller claimed it wouldn't have even been able to carry the weight of a bird. His friend died of a terrible illness a year later, and at the time of his death he no longer looked like himself—but he looked exactly like his forerunner (Creighton 1957, 4-7). Like the story Catherine told of her mother's uncle, the forerunner appeared in the form of the individual whose death was approaching, at the time of their death or funeral. This forerunner, as with Catherine's great uncle's forerunner and all others I have found in literature, did not respond to attempts at communication. Grave clothes were not mentioned in this story, but it is a recurring element in stories of forerunners seen in the form of a loved one. An example of this is the story of healthy married couple, in which one night, when the husband went to close the front door that had been inexplicably unlocking and opening, came face to face with his wife, who was wearing a white dress. He closed the door and returned to his wife, who in reality was waiting for him in bed. When she suddenly fell ill and died a few days later, she was buried in a white dress (Creighton 1957, 12).

Analysis

Catherine's feelings regarding both her own and her family's experiences with forerunners have not changed since her encounter fifty-five years ago, and her belief in forerunners has not wavered. When considering the role of legends and memorates in areas of

cultural anxieties/boundaries, I find forerunners to reflect the human anxieties around death in the form of a Celtic-derived (Creighton 1957; Davey and MacKinnon 2016; Jamison 1893) supernatural phenomenon. While forerunners are not acknowledged in the Protestant-Christian mythos, it is not unusual that they are commonly experienced in synchronicity with this belief-system. When discussing cultural values, Thomas (2007, 31) explains how stories about the supernatural can help discern cultural stresses, especially around trauma, death, and the body. Christianity, a monotheistic religion centered on the duality of good ("sacred", God, Jesus) and evil ("profane", the Devil) makes the afterlife a significant issue for believers, particularly as it pertains to ensuring that one's soul goes to heaven rather than hell. Because of this, forerunner lore in Nova Scotia is generally associated with what many would consider a bad or wrong death (Magliocco 2018). The death of Catherine's father, her great uncle, and most stories described in the referenced literature, have been unexpected and/or premature. The anomalous light forerunners in Cape Breton, according to Thomas (2007, 49), can be understood metaphorically—as the expression of an awareness of death as being part of the natural world. This correlates with Bennett's (1999) analysis of how the spiritual world permeates the mundane one. Exchanging stories, and forerunner lore, in small, rural communities—like the one in which Catherine was raised—shapes the common elements of many personal experiences into one public, cultural narrative (Bennet 1999, 45) that merges surviving knowledge of the Celtic occult (Creighton 1957, 16) with Christianity. Distinguishing supernatural narratives such as forerunners, from stories recognized as fiction, is the debate that they encourage regarding the nature of reality (Thomas 2007, 30). Catherine and others who have told their memorates about forerunners consistently provided evidence and reasoning while telling their stories. She described, in detail, the investigation made for the loud noise on the night she encountered her father's forerunner, and the physical evidence left on their door. Similarly, in Creighton's (1957) story—collected from the participant who was chased by his friend's forerunner—the teller was extremely conscious about being judged as irrational, as many narrators are (Goldstein 2007, 71), and thus clarified that he was not drunk at the time.

A pattern worth considering in the stories provided by Catherine is gender and natural ability. Usually, but not always, forerunners are experienced by those with an "endowed power" (Davey and MacKinnon 2016, 65). The internal processes of spiritual divination, exemplified in Catherine's family through clairvoyance and clairaudience (Magliocco 2018), have an apparent pattern—which is that the ability is experienced by women, and passed matrilineally. Catherine did not have any theories as to why only the women in her family have these abilities, nor why the ability appears to pass from mother to daughter, but not to every daughter. The men share these experiences only when it is their death being foretold. Catherine and her mother—evidently possessing this ability—and her father, the person who later died, were the only ones in the house who heard the unmissable crash in the middle of the night. In the case of our family's experiences, only those with the ability to foresee future events and/or see forerunners, and the individuals whose deaths are being foretold have this experience. I believe that this take on psychic ability and gender may be relevant to Catherine's family experiences, but as she did not claim any belief in a meaning behind this pattern, I cannot make any firm conclusions. It is also worth noting that this patterning in gender and matrilineal descent is not

prevalent in forerunner lore I have seen thus far, though the ability to see one's own forerunner is.

Conclusion

The widespread belief in forerunners across Nova Scotia displays how supernatural phenomena outside of the binary of "sacred" and "profane" can, and often do, exist as popular belief in communities which hold a religious worldview that polarizes things outside of the natural world as good or evil. While Bennett (1999) discusses wraiths of the newly dead and dying, or warning omens, as being non-polarized in virtue—as they never actually harm the witness, or person foretold to die—the fear of forerunners in these communities reflects the inherent threat of the unexplained. These phenomena cannot be effectively categorized as "sacred" or "profane", but because death is a permanent and cross-cultural concern, folklore regarding the topic is allowed to be adapted, or incorporated into the belief systems of Nova Scotian communities.

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Underreporting of HIV in Russia: An analysis of the role of conspiracy theories & the lived realities of drug users

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Abstract: While the available evidence demonstrates that human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a massive problem across Russia today, there is little agreement regarding the actual extent of the disease throughout the country. There is also reason to believe that available statistics greatly underreport its actual prevalence. Through a systematic review of the available literature, this paper attempts to provide some explanation for this underreporting, and for the disagreement regarding estimates. Ultimately, it is determined that heavy underreporting of HIV among drug abusers is one major contributing factor. Additionally, the widespread prevalence of conspiracy theories regarding HIV has further contributed to the overall underreporting of the disease in Russia.

Introduction

The prevalence of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) in the Russian Federation has seen a dramatic increase in the past few decades. In 2006, Russia's President Vladimir Putin publicly acknowledged the major threat that this disease poses to the people of the country (Kravstov 2011). However, there is little agreement among organizations which have attempted to collect statistics about the epidemic, and estimations of HIV prevalence vary. There are numerous possibilities for why this is the case. Amongst the most salient is that there is underreporting of HIV, particularly amongst drug users and those influenced by conspiracy theories related to AIDS. Drug users are individuals who are at the highest risk of HIV infection within Russia. Despite this, there are numerous disincentives for these individuals to get tested for the disease. Beyond this, the rise of conspiracy theories about HIV has spread to a remarkable degree throughout the last few years. This deters at-risk individuals from getting tested, and subsequently, from getting treated with antiretroviral therapy (ART).

This paper will first provide varying estimates for the prevalence of HIV in Russia. Following this, it will focus on the experiences of drug users who are highly vulnerable to HIV, and their reluctance to self-report. Next, here will be an explanation as to why conspiracy theories of HIV/AIDS have risen in Russia, and an analysis of the role that these theories play in people's decision-making processes regarding HIV testing. These factors were chosen because there is abundant evidence which indicates that they each play a pivotal role in the underreporting of this disease. The goal of this paper is thus, to provide a detailed explanation as to how and why these factors are involved in the ongoing underreporting of the HIV epidemic. It will demonstrate the role that these factors play in the lack of agreement amongst experts on the number of people infected, and this information will be useful in determining the

actual magnitude of the epidemic in the country. Ultimately, this analysis will prove valuable to experts for determining how the resources of the Russian Federation should be allocated in order to better confront this public health concern.

Inaccurate reporting of prevalence

Before one can begin to properly understand the extent of the HIV/AIDS problem in Russia, it is crucial that there is an agreement about the number of people who are infected. Unfortunately, such an agreement does not currently exist. As far back as 2002, official Russian statistics claimed that there were roughly 200,000 cases across the country (UNAIDS/WHO 2003), but because of what were perceived as major flaws in how Russia captured this data (due to substantial underreporting), a report by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the United States provided a significantly higher estimate during that year. The CIA's report estimated that there were more than two million people in Russia who were infected at that point in time, a significantly higher number than provided by Russia itself (National Intelligence Committee 2002). At that very same time, UNAIDS described the region as having the "world's fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemic" (UNAIDS 2002, 32), which may explain why, in 2002, some sources projected that eight million Russian people would be infected by the year 2010. This figure would have corresponded to about 10% of the population having the disease (Sharp 2006; National Intelligence Committee 2002).

This lack of agreement has continued in recent years. In 2016, the CIA, which had reliable statistics of HIV prevalence for 119 countries, had no data for Russia (CIA 2018). Similarly, UNAIDS did not have data for Russia in 2014, 2015 and 2016, despite having estimates for more than 130 other countries during those years (UNAIDS 2018). However, some organizations have stated that they have managed to collect data from Russia in recent years. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) claimed that there were approximately one million infections in Russia in 2016 (WHO 2016), whereas the Federal AIDS Center of the Russian Federation put estimates at 1.3 million people (Godlevskiy 2017). It must be noted that there is evidence which indicates that these estimates both greatly underreport the number of actual cases, as a report from 2014 found that it is possible that only half of the number of people currently infected with HIV in Russia have been formally diagnosed (Beyrer et al. 2017).

The plight of drug users

Within the Russian Federation, illegal drug usage rates are extraordinarily high. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of drug users has seen a significant rise, and today, there are as many as 8.5 million drug addict—corresponding to about six percent of the country's total population (Galeotti 2016; USDS 2018). Heroin is the drug that is most commonly used, but in recent years there has also been a rise in the creation of dangerous, homemade intravenous drugs. For example, Krokodil, a drug that is composed partly of codeine,

gasoline, paint thinner, and a chemical from matches, has seen increasing use in recent years (Shelton et al. 2015).

In Russia, those who use drugs illegally are most likely to be infected with HIV. A very high number of these drug users either utilize unsterilized drug paraphernalia, or share needles, and this greatly increases the likelihood that one will contract HIV (Garcia 2014; Shelton et al. 2015). Some estimate that about 80% of cases of HIV in the country occur amongst drug users; other estimates are as high as 90% (Malinowska-Sempruch et al. 2003; Fettig et al. 2014; Zigon 2010). While these statistics demonstrate that many HIV-positive Russians are drug users, there is evidence that the number of illicit drug users infected with the disease may be underreported to a significant degree. One example comes from a study conducted in Toglatti City, where 74% of drug users were unaware of the fact that they were HIV-positive (Rhodes et al. 2003) In another study conducted involving drug users in Moscow, Volgograd and Barnaul, approximately half of the individuals infected with the virus were unaware of the fact that they were HIV positive (Rhodes et al. 2006).

One of the most significant reasons for HIV underreporting amongst drug users is the harsh punishment and policing that they experience with Russian authorities. Unauthorized arrests of drug users, as well as the planting of drugs has been reported to occur by Russian police (Lunze et al. 2014). In their work, Rhodes et al. (2003) provide the account of a former drug user who describes his experience dealing with an unlawful arrest by members of the Russian police:

"The police stopped us and asked for our documents. We didn't have any documents on us so they asked us to follow them. They searched us and asked whether we were drug users. We said no. They asked us whether we used to take drugs and I said that I had even been to prison for that. They checked my veins but I didn't have any track-marks. They arrested us anyway. Only later they randomly decided to let two of us go" (44).

In harsher cases that have been recorded, members of the Russian police have been known to extort users for money or drugs; in the worst cases, people were beaten, tortured, and even raped by the police (Sarang et al. 2010). In Moscow, one drug user had gone as far as to claim that "I don't know of one single drug user who has not been beaten up by police" (Lunze et al. 2015, 6).

Numerous justifications have been made by police officers who commit these deeds. Some officers seem to be genuine when they state that the use of violence is necessary to achieve the desirable goal of lowering rates of drug usage in the country (Lunze et al. 2014). Others in the police force, however, perceive drug addicts as immoral people who need to be punished (Sarang et al. 2010). Some take this mindset to the extreme and consider drug users as no longer being people. A member of the Russian police interviewed by Lunze et al. (2015) stated that, "in the eyes of police officers, people who use drugs are basically not human beings.... Therefore, they don't have human rights" (7).

Police brutality has resulted in a notable amount of drug users living in constant fear of the authorities. In their article, Lunze et al. (2015) interviewed individuals who stated that drug users avoid any forms of official structure and service; because of this, many individuals are too scared to go to pharmacies or other facilities that provide medical services (Lancet 2011; Lunze et al. 2015). In one study that took place in St. Petersburg—involving 387 people who were actively using drugs—24% of them had never even tested themselves for HIV (Niccolai et al. 2010) for fear that accessing these health services might result in the state registering them as drug users. There is evidence that such a fear is justified. Facilities that provide health services for drug addicts in Russia have commonly provided lists of names of patients to the police (Platt et al. 2004; Rhodes et al. 2006). Drug users interviewed by Rhodes et al. (2003) stated that once they are officially registered as drug users by the police, who now have their information, the probability that they are going to be searched and unfairly arrested by police officers rises. Furthermore, being registered as a drug user also makes it more difficult for a person to both find housing, and to attain a job in Russia (Platt et al. 2004; Zigon 2010).

When considering the deterrents for drug users in seeking medical service, it is also critical to consider the role of the strict laws and policies on drugs currently in place in Russia. For example, carrying more than half a gram of certain opioids can result in up to three years in prison (Garcia 2014). As well, despite the inclusion of prescription methadone and buprenorphine on the World Health Organization's essential drug list to help treat drug addiction through a harm-reduction approach, Russia has completely banned these drugs (Beyrer et al. 2017). Furthermore, if a medical professional is caught distributing methadone, then they can be imprisoned for up to twenty years. The Russian Federal AIDS Center justifies this, stating that harm reduction approaches are not compatible with Russia's model for treating drug addiction and HIV (Colborne 2016). Russia's current president, Vladimir Putin, has additionally stated that Russia's focus has consistently remained on a zero-tolerance policy towards drug use. In a speech that took place in 2013 at an international drug conference, he bluntly stated that, "...we, therefore, believe it essential to fight all types of drugs, and we are worried by the more 'relaxed laws' that some countries have passed, and that lead to legalization of so-called 'soft' drugs. This is a very dangerous path!" (Marshall 2014, 2).

These laws and policies on drugs in Russia all serve as major deterrents for drug addicts to seek any form of medical treatment, thereby decreasing the likelihood that one will get tested for HIV. In addition, these policies contribute greatly to the stigmatization that drug users face by Russian society (WHO 2006; Lancet 2011). Stigmatization towards drug users is very common in Russia. Numerous scholars have shown that the existence of this stigma serves as another major barrier for high-risk individuals to get tested for HIV (Chesney and Smith 1999; Mahajan et al. 2008). Moreover, drug users can even face overt stigmatization and discrimination by health care professionals who work with addicts, and this has proved to be yet another reason for individuals not to get tested for HIV, as well as to avoid HIV treatment entirely (Kiriazova et al. 2017; King et al. 2013). In one study, patients in St. Petersburg hospitals described being labelled by staff as "'not like human beings,' 'unlike people,' and 'like

criminals'" (Kiriazova et al. 2017, 560). This all demonstrates how Russia's current policies on drugs have contributed to creating environments where stigma towards drug users is rampant throughout society. If such stigmatization continues to exist, major underreporting of HIV is also likely to continue.

AIDS denialism

The increasing prevalence of conspiracy theories which deny that HIV results in life-threatening immunosuppression and eventually AIDS, is important to consider when attempting to understand why rates of this disease are underreported. The origins of these myths seem to have emerged in the Soviet Union in 1983 (Nattrass 2012). During this time, in what was known as 'Operation Infektion', a false publication was created in a New Delhi newspaper by the secret police of the Soviet Union (Boghardt 2009; Nattrass 2012). The article claimed that the AIDS virus was created by American scientists to be used as a bioweapon. Despite Soviet leaders later admitting that this claim was false, the conspiratorial ideas about AIDS spread across the world. Over time, numerous variants of this myth have formed. Amongst the most well-known variants arose in 2000, when South African President Thabo Mbeki rejected the science showing that HIV causes AIDS and he vehemently opposed the fact that ARTs could treat the disease (Geissler and Sprinkle 2013). The results of this denial were disastrous. Pape (2014) states that if this denial had not occurred and had antiretroviral drugs instead been provided to South African citizens during Mbeki's time as president, approximately 343,000 deaths could have been prevented.

There are numerous factors which explain how this myth has re-emerged in the Russian Federation today. Just as the initial myth moved across the world, variants of the original myth have continued to cross national borders and, as a result, have returned to Russia (Nattrass 2012). This is demonstrated by the fact that numerous denialists in Russia often cite American scientist, Peter Duesberg, who has questioned the link between HIV and AIDS, and has been quoted by Thabo Mbeki throughout his speeches as president. It is also plausible that the myths never actually left Russia after they had been created, but rather, they simply went underground for a certain number of years. Another reason these myths have re-emerged is that a small number of scientists other than Duesberg have also questioned the link between HIV and AIDS, with some questioning not only the efficacy of the HIV test, but also the antiretroviral drugs themselves (Goodson 2014).

Within Russia, modern AIDS denialists have commonly mentioned and manipulated the statements of these few scientists when discouraging individuals from getting tested. Joan Shenton, an individual who has published several books and documentaries that focus on questioning the link between HIV and AIDS, has frequently made public statements with the intent of deterring people from getting tested and treated for HIV. In an interview conducted with Shenton by the Russian television network *RT*, Shenton stated that, "the HIV test is an absolute crime" (RT 2010). This claim seems to be based on the incorrect belief from denialists that immunological tests can produce an extraordinarily high number of false-positives as

someone can supposedly harbour the HIV antibody without being infected with HIV; denialists, such as Shenton, base this claim on the idea that HIV tests are entirely invalid because the virus has never been completely isolated. Therefore, they believe that the test will instead inevitably be contaminated because it will detect specific proteins and cells, but not the virus (Kalichman 2009).

This claim, and other similar ones about the dangers of HIV testing and treatments, has been repeated by the many existent Russian groups on social networks that deny the dangers of HIV. Such groups on social media have been rising in prominence in recent years. Some of these groups have members that total in the thousands and one of the largest of these groups has more than 17,000 members (Meylakhs et al. 2014; Rykov et al. 2016; VK 2018). These groups often include members who simply share and discuss their views on theories of HIV, but in some other cases, there is a sizeable number of people who provide direct advice on topics with titles such as "harm and consequences of ART" and "Don't test for HIV!" (Meylakhs et al. 2014).

There is significant evidence that claims by these people are being increasingly heeded by Russian citizens. Meylakhs et al. (2014) demonstrate that many people who are new to these social media groups often seek advice either because they are deeply confused about what to do about their diagnosis, or because they are contemplating whether they should get tested in the first place. Numerous news sources have shown the tragic results of the prevalence of these myths; numerous Russian citizens have lost their lives choosing to withhold HIV treatment after following the advice of denialists (Keeley 2017; Mole 2017; RT 2017; BL 2017). In one case, a Russian mother and her young child both lost their lives to HIV after the mother had thrown away the drugs that were prescribed to her; the case was determined to be linked to an activist group known as *All-Russian Parents' Assembly*, who advised parents to accept antiretroviral drugs from physicians but to then dispose of them in the trash (Pape 2014).

While currently there is a lack of research providing quantitative data about the approximate number of people in Russia who have refused to get tested for HIV because of these conspiracy theories, there is reason to believe that this number is by no means insignificant. This is due to an increasingly high number of ways for people to become exposed to the views of denialists and therefore, become possibly convinced or persuaded about these views on HIV. It may happen because of reading denialists' books, watching films, searching for information online, hearing rumours, or by listening to or engaging in dialogue with activists. If they become persuaded, it is possible that many people may simply choose to not get tested and, thereafter, would not feel the need to further discuss the topic in public nor think about it in detail. If this is the case for many Russians, then it is plausible that there is a higher number of people who are currently infected with HIV, but are not at all accounted for in the country's official statistics.

Conclusion

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Russia is a serious public health concern. Despite this, there is currently little agreement about the extent of the epidemic, and there seems to be even less agreement regarding what should be done about this major problem. The experiences of drug users have shown that many feel alienated from society and are greatly deterred from seeking health services. The result of this is that many HIV-positive individuals who illicitly use drugs are not getting tested and are not receiving life-saving treatments. The re-emergence of conspiracy theories regarding HIV are rapidly spreading throughout Russia via the internet. This has resulted in the unnecessary, tragic deaths of citizens throughout the country, and in some cases, it has even led to the death of children. Additionally, these theories are causing an increasing number of people to refuse getting tested for HIV.

It is not universally self-evident how these issues relating to HIV should be confronted. While numerous countries have moved towards harm-reduction approaches to curb HIV rates, the head of Russia's Federal AIDS Center has instead called for 'risk elimination,' which corresponds to a complete rejection of tolerance towards drug use (Colborne 2016). Conspiracy theories spread via the internet are very difficult to confront, and involve issues regarding freedom of speech, censorship and distrust towards the scientific establishment. There are no easy solutions to this complex phenomenon. Regardless of which solutions are accepted and which are rejected, the fact remains that the attainment of knowledge which will inform experts about the actual extent of HIV in Russia is greatly needed. Only when the problem is adequately understood can effective change with proper, long-term solutions begin to emerge.

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Monstrous Anthropologies: Is an ethnography of monsters possible?

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Abstract: This paper fundamentally questions whether the ethnographic method is suitable for constructing an anthropology of monsters. In doing so, it asks whether an anthropologist can ever effectively study phenomenon outside of the researcher's ontological capacity. This necessarily involves a rethinking of what it means to be human in different ontological contexts. Subsequently, anthropologists must be aware of this ontological bias within their data and fieldwork, and how it can transform their analysis. This paper argues that in order to study monsters, one must continually question the fundamental properties of the things one encounters, and reflect on one's own place in the "ontological turn".

It was late December when I saw the ghost. I was standing on the staircase at the Burn, a country-estate in the northeast of Scotland. The caretaker was explaining how the old owner still haunted the house, by metamorphosing into various animals. That night, as if by magic, I encountered a live, azure-blue butterfly. Despite its appearance in front of me, I dismissed it as a coincidence. And yet, I could not explain the strangeness of a live butterfly in mid-winter.

Had I been conducting ethnography, how would I have made sense of what I'd seen? The definition of 'monster' seems to elude a definitive meaning. Invariably fluid, contested and contextual, it "remains at the boundary of epistemological comfort" (Dendle 2012, 442; Musharbash 2014, 4) Etymologically, Cohen theorises the monster as "that which reveals" or "that which warns" (1996, 4). They are "indicators of strangeness and danger, hybrid marvels revealing distance from the familiar and the safe" (Musharbash 2014, 3). From my experience, I would define the monster as an "Othered" being (material or immaterial) that unsettles an order, embodying a difference or alterity from the familiar (Thurman 2014, 26). The ghost-butterfly indeed struck me, and was a deviation from the norm.

Perhaps though, the monster as concept can be applied more widely—as an analytical tool for anthropologists to use. It can reveal social structures, relations between the Self and the Other, or even issues of personhood. If the monster's existence pivots around these kinds of human issues, it would suggest that an anthropology of monsters specifically is not possible. However, how would ethnographic observation explain moments when monsters become real, such as the ghost-butterfly? What happens when one's observations do not make sense in one's nature of things, within one's being-in-the-world? If I could not explain my own experience, how would I understand this encounter from an informant's perspective? As anthropologists travel and translate between ontologies or "ways of being" (Boellstorff 2016, 388), they make their own claims to what they observe. Instead of an anthropology of monsters, they create monstrous anthropologies—by manipulating the fragments to form a narrative. Hence, it can be argued that

anthropology, as it is currently manifested, cannot study the reality of monsters from within the researcher's own "authentic" ontological capacity.

Nevertheless, perhaps an anthropology of monsters can exist; one that incorporates humans by revealing how they understand the world around them (Musharbash 2014, 2). For example, the Minmin lights allow the Mak Mak Marranunggu in Australia to relate to their country, their land, and warns them of strangers (Thurman 2014, 32). Monsters can directly transform lived experience; they are nestled intimately within the lives of our informants. This view suggests that monsters "exist only to be read" and are socially constructed—simply composites of "pure culture" (Cohen 1996, 4). By analysing how monsters are entwined within our informants' everyday lives, anthropologists can show how they affect wider social processes.

Subsequently, the monster can become "good to think with" (Musharbash 2014, 5), especially in showing how they shape social practice. The Tao children of Taiwan are socialised specifically to protect them from their monster – the Anito – a type of ancestral spirit (Funk 2014, 143). Children are kept close to the house so as not to be possessed by the Anito (2014, 149). To resist this threat, toddlers are constantly touched or scared from behind to "toughen up" their souls (2014, 154). Despite the monster not being "material" or "visible", it has a tangible effect on Tao lives. This can call into question what anthropologists consider 'real', if the monster itself cannot be seen. The only thing real and observable becomes the effect the monster has on the people in their cultural-context. This seems to be the anthropologists' limit; they can only study the observable effect of monsters in making sense of these social processes. It becomes clear anthropologists cannot study monsters in themselves, but only monsters in relation to humans.

This suggests that monsters can only be studied as how they explain the order of things. Monsters reveal what is "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966), and can uncover boundaries within societies. The presence of monsters indicates chaos and disrupts the norm (Cohen 1996). For example, Presterudstuen (2014) shows how Fijian ghosts unsettle order. He contextualises Fijian ghosts as representative of social hierarchies based on racial boundaries. As part of a post-colonial order, ghosts haunt Europeans or Indo-Fijians to remind them that they are visitors on the land (2014, 128). This creates boundaries between "Fijianness" and "non-Fijianness" which allows indigenous Fijians to claim land, as non-Fijian landowners are more likely to be haunted (2014, 128). In his work, Presterudstuen explains how monsters must be politically and historically situated to be understood: they are a product of context that would not make sense elsewhere.

However, if monsters represent social order, then the anthropologist—in studying and seeking to understand these orders—risks "imposing a rationality on [their] subjects" (Strathern 1987, 260) as they try to make conclusions based on their observations. By untangling these cultural contexts, the logic of the anthropologist, who acts almost as an interpreter, becomes dominant in rationalising and "making sense" of what they see. Therefore, one must contest cultural relativist models within an anthropology of monsters, as they fail to engage with

difference. They use context as an excuse to explain alterity, and different realities, and this risks labelling societies as "organic wholes" that are understood only in their own terms (Strathern 1987, 251-254). Ultimately, they reduce an anthropology of monsters to a comparison of different systems, aiming to "grasp the native's point of view" (Malinowski 1922; Strathern 1987, 252), but implying this "point of view" is not real in itself.

Instead of reducing monsters to markers of cultural difference, perhaps they could be better studied through similarity. Psychological arguments contend that monsters can exist universally within the psyche. They argue monsters are not located in the field-site, but within our "innermost self" (Gilmore 2003, 194). In this case, monsters are more suitable for psychoanalytical investigation, not ethnographic observation. Freud contends that the propensity for an individual to become a monster stems from "oral aggression" in children's psycho-sexual development (Freud 1905; Gilmore 2003, 181). He argues that we fear man-eating monsters due to a repressed urge to cannibalise our mothers. This is an ambivalent desire to "gain control over the external world and make up for the...loss of the comforting object" (2003, 181). This urge, or potential for monstrousness, exists under the surface in seemingly "normal" humans. Subsequently, it suggests that one can become what one fears, that the "invisible monster is already within us" (Weinstock 2013, 284). Thus, the fear of monsters becomes a relational, symbolic of the fear of the Self (Gilmore 2003, 193).

This example can be critiqued for being Euro-centric, as the psychosexual monster-in-the-mind is a product of culturally-specific sexual anxieties (Foucault 2003). These "monstrous" psyches only exist in specific socio-political contexts. However, it is valuable in questioning whether the real monster must always be visible. In this example, the monster is found within the human mind; the monster and the human are eclipsed (Gilmore 2003, 191). This fluid boundary questions the empirical reality of monsters, and thus, whether ethnography is suited to study them. How do we become participant-observers if we cannot see, let alone notice, the object of our study?

This implies once again, that perhaps an anthropology of monsters is not possible, because it is not about studying monsters in relation to humans, but studying humanity itself. This is no longer a metaphorical or cultural question, but an ontological one. To study an anthropology of monsters, one must question what it means to be human in different ontological contexts. For example, Tao humanness is constructed as relational to the Anito (Funk 2014). As Tao social behaviour constructs personhood, not behaving like a Tao person can transform you into an Anito (Funk 2014, 147). Subsequently, the monster defines what it means to be human—just as the invisible-psychopath-monster questions the same boundary in the West. If humanity itself is a cultural construct, there are no natural monsters nor humans. Both categories are not natural or "real". Inverting this logic, if we conceptualise humans to be real, then constructions of monsters must be just as real also.

However, it is how anthropologists understand this reality that is a problem, particularly when it is understood through cultural relativism. Using monsters as a tool "to think with" is

insufficient. This regards monsters as real only in their social context. As an anthropology of monsters is so human-centric, monsters become real only in how they relate to their humans, but not real in their own terms (Whitehead 2012, 220). The tendency to see monsters as "metaphors, messages, indications of deeper meaning or inspiration" (Gilmore 2003, 9) reduces the agency of monsters. Instead of seeing monsters having "a way of becoming real" (Poole 2011, 107), we must be more open to accepting they are real in themselves. Thus, for an anthropology of monsters to be possible, we must study monsters as situated in different ontologies or natures, rather than cultures (Viveiros de Castro 1998). By following an anthropology where the human is at the centre of analysis, we risk denying a "true" study of monsters (Whitehead, 2012).

Thus, anthropologists should question the ontological implications of their data and be wary of how this transforms their analysis. This involves questioning the fundamental properties of things we encounter. For example, Evans-Pritchard (1937) reduces the Azande reality of magic, witchcraft and spirits to a belief system that holds together their social structure. He argues that Azande oracles exist to "appropriate blame for misfortunes" (Evans-Pritchard 1937; Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 2). Subsequently, his observations are subconsciously manipulated to fit his argument. For example, he describes witnessing a light passing his hut at night. Although there was no rational explanation, he was convinced the light came from an Azande person, who do not walk at night for fear of witches (1937, 11). Evans-Pritchard sets up a "nature of belief" (Goslinga 2013, 397) that denies the existence of witches as it does not hold true within his nature of things. He therefore universalises his ontology in his fieldwork and represents only (what seems to be) objective fact (Goslinga 2013, 338).

Therefore, ethnography must be reformed, or somewhat reimagined, in order to effectively study monsters. Translating and interpreting Other ontologies implicates how different natures are considered real. Willerslev argues that ethnographic observation renders this difficult, as "the Western understanding of the real collapses into the true" (2011, 506; Crapanzano 1980, 9). Particularly, Willerslev (2011) shows how ethnography contextualises the real through what can be observed, the material and the visible. This is as Euro-American knowledge production uses "geometric reasoning" (Paterson 2005). Distinctions between subjects and objects are based on the visual, objective distance between things. Sight reduces the "multidimensionality" of things, as it makes them more objective, and so, communicable or translatable between people (2005, 122). Thus, sight, for Euro-Americans, becomes a more objective or "real" way of knowing. Euro-American anthropology struggles with conceptualising and reproducing these "multidimensional" aspects of things as they are too subjective. Studying monsters is difficult as they are immaterial, and thus perceived to be not empirically real.

For this reason, Willerslev challenges "ethnographically orientated particularism" (2011, 505) within anthropological knowledge production. To resolve this, when studying anthropologies that concern different natures or realities, one must be extra-reflective of their ontological position. Willerslev contends that in some ways, a return to "armchair anthropology" can help us understand this multidimensionality or "virtual totality" of things (2011, 504).

Whilst not advocating for the writing of "persuasive fictions" (Strathern 1987), he suggests that anthropologists should "step back" from being immersed in the context of their field-site. He argues that removing the anthropologist from the context can help data be interpreted more "imaginatively", by "bundling together historically and geographically disparate materials" (Willerslev 2011, 505). This is what Frazer, the armchair anthropologist, attempts: "the collecting together of diverse customs in order to throw light on one particular set" (Strathern 1987, 254). This allows one to ask ontological questions of what they encounter: questioning the very basic, core assumptions of what people and things might be, and asking what it is to be a person or thing in this nature (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 4). This recognises how (immaterial or phenomenological) things can be conceptualised differently, to be "genuinely real in human experience" (Willerslev 2011, 506).

To do so, the anthropologist must acknowledge they themselves are an instrument in their own research (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 19). The anthropologist must be critical of not only their ontological position, but the power they have in translating their encounter (Goslinga 2013, 394). Inevitably, they can only use terms which belong to their own social world or ontology (Strathern 1987, 256). This was evident in Evans-Pritchard's fieldwork. It gave him the power to create and transform a conceptual universe as he made sense of what he encountered from his own position (Strathern 1987, 256). Counter-intuitively, his ethnographic method becomes an "interpretation that transforms the very thing it interprets" (Derrida 1994, 51; Boellstorff 2016, 397). Crapanzano (1980) argues that this forms a reality that is not true for either the anthropologist, or the person they are studying. Subsequently, it actively treats the Other like an object, denying them a voice to conceptualise their own universe or reality (Strathern 1987, 264). By manipulating how knowledge is produced, the anthropologist appropriates the fragments they come across to create something anew. In this way, it is not an anthropology of monsters, but a monstrous anthropology.

Holbraad and Pederson (2017) argue that the "ontological turn" can help anthropology better conceptualise Other realities (of monsters or otherwise). This turn is not suggesting that anthropologists should "see differently", but that they should "see different things" during their fieldwork (2017, 6). They suggest that instead, we should be treating ethnography itself as the "object of analytical concepts" (2017, 6). We should use it to rethink and challenge what things might be. This would allow anthropologists to ask "ontological questions without taking ontology as an answer (2017, 11). By being open to other phenomenon in the field-site, anthropologists can be critical of existing anthropological concepts or processes (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 7). These can be deconstructed to better understand how monsters can be real in other natures.

Presterudstuen (2014) could have utilised this "ontological turn" within his experience with a Fijian ghost. He believed that he spoke to a Fijian woman, whilst his informant knew that she was a ghost (Presterudstuen 2014, 127). Despite appearing visible and material, Presterudstuen could not translate his informant's concept of reality to his own (2014, 140). He reduced the experience to them being from different ontological perspectives, rather than

questioning the ghost in itself. Instead of asking ontological questions (e.g. asking what it means to be a human or a monster) Presterudstuen takes ontology for an answer in this example. Anthropologists, in studying monsters, should be wary of "pluralising perspectives" in this way; using them to explain difference "in the way culture once did" (Whitehead 2012, 219). Presterudstuen could have used this opportunity to ask ontological questions about his own position: what was real for him, and what it was in his nature that led him to his disbelief.

Consequently, Boellstorff suggests that if we conceptualise our ontology—or any other—as not real, we can change how we relate to Others (2016, 397). He shows that comparing ontologies by difference fragments exoticizes them, which serves to divide us (2016, 390). Instead, he proposes to see ontological difference as internal and relational (2016, 393), suggesting that we engage with the ontological turn through similitude. He suggests that some concepts can translate across ontological contexts that help us understand the reality of the Other. By helping us form "paradigmatic relationships" (2016, 393) we can better understand the reality of phenomenon such as monsters.

Thus, an anthropology of monsters is possible if we remove this "bolt of difference". This can help us understand the realities of monsters by allowing us to "align our conceptual apparatus" (Boellstorff 2016, 397). Willerslev (2011) argues that some phenomenon, such as the animist soul, can be compared across ontologies. This is the doctrine that every natural thing and phenomenon has a soul and is alive (Willerslev 2011). He shows how the animist soul is theorised through similitude to show it as "virtually real" across ontologies, which "situates it outside the zone of empirical investigation" (Willerslev 2011, 506). This is why "no creature within perspectival cosmologies ever sees souls" (Willerslev 2011, 520). Subsequently, there are ways to conceptualise differences that don't universalise, or standardise, phenomena (Boellstorff 2016, 391). By not taking traditional anthropological concepts for granted, we can see how some concepts transcend ontological difference. By being critical of this difference, we can relate to Other natures to better conceptualise immaterial, virtual phenomenon.

Viveiros de Castro suggests that adopting "perspectivism" can help us understand these phenomena. Within the Euro-American nature of things, to have "perspective" is to be human (Viveiros de Castro 2009, 1; Whitehead 2012, 218). Thus, within our nature of things we deny agency to animals, objects, digital or virtual beings—and also monsters—as we believe they do not have perspectives. This constructs a rigid subject/object distinction. However, within perspectivism, the world is comprised of multiple subjects or persons—that all see reality from a human perspective (Viveiros de Castro: 1998: 469). Consequently, it is not that they see "alternative points of view of the same world, but the same point of view into different realities" (Willerslev 2011, 512). By bestowing these subjects with perspective, "they see themselves as humans see themselves" (Willerselv 2011, 513). In this ontology, it is the subject that is universal, and nature that is specific. This suggests that multiple natures exist where "animals and spirits may see humans as animal—prey to the same extent that animals as prey see humans as spirits or as animal predators" (Whitehead 2012, 222). It is this acceptance that we all have the same viewpoint into different realities that Euro-American anthropology finds challenging.

By understanding that we have a similarity in our "multinaturalism", rather than difference in our "multiculturalism", we can transcend these challenges. By understanding perspective as a common-ground we share, and accepting the multi-natural existence of monsters, we are better equipped to study them.

Thus, to successfully facilitate a study of monsters, we must be continuously aware that we are "subjects of our own knowledge" (Foucault 1984, 49; Boellstorff 2016, 397). Boellstorff suggests instead we should perhaps be developing an "onto-epistomology", or "the study of practise of knowing in being" (Barad 2003, 829; Boellstorff 2016, 397). Therefore, an anthropology of monsters is only possible if we accept our judgements will always be from our way of being. Successfully using an "ontological turn" should not try to transcend this, or expect an ontologically perfect truth, or understanding of reality. Rather, its success should be measured to the "degree…it can remain faithful to – and conscious of – its own design" (Holbraad and Pederson 2017, 22). Anthropology must recognise that a wholly complete explanation for any phenomena is impossible, that "no one can say why another does as they do, because we cannot even do that for ourselves" (Whitehead 2012, 222). Therefore, as long as ethnography recognises its ontological limitations, and questions the basic, fundamental anthropological devices we use to explain things, it can still be successful.

Until then, Whitehead maintains that anthropology is "not there yet" in going beyond the human to study monsters themselves (2012, 223). He argues that anthropology is still too human-centric to effectively study different natures or virtual beings. However, I am hesitant to suggest if this should be anthropology's fundamental aim. Underlying these arguments is the question of anthropology's purpose. If it is indeed to study people, as its name suggests, perhaps an anthropology of how monsters affect people might be sufficient. If we can couple this with the acceptance that our account will never be perfect truth, always slightly a "persuasive fiction" (Strathern 1987), this might be a more realistic goal. Although anthropology has difficulty in studying the immaterial, the discipline does not exist in a cultural (or maybe even an ontological) vacuum (Whitehead 2012, 215). There is nothing to suggest that this goal is achievable, at least in part.

Ultimately, it becomes clear that a true, perfect ontological understanding of monsters is not possible. Until Euro-American anthropology can fundamentally accept how the "multi-natural" or the "virtual totality" of things affect our fieldwork, there will always be a disjuncture. This is the reason that I could not fully accept that I saw the spirit of a dead house-owner reincarnate as a butterfly. Despite seeing the caretaker's story visualise in front of me, I could not comprehend the reality or nature in which the ghost-butterfly resided. However, if anthropologists are not so quick to dismiss – and are critical of what things, people, or phenomenon they encounter, they could go some way in producing more honest ethnographies. If we accepted the multi-naturality of things, we would find it easier to accept that "impossible" things exist. By being open to ourselves about our position in our fieldwork, and our place in the "ontological turn", perhaps we can still achieve an anthropology of monsters - instead of constructing our own monstrous anthropologies.

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Northern Mexican Narco-culture: Evolving multi-sensorial aesthetics of social mobility and resistance

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Abstract: This research investigates how narco-culture functions as a subversive form of social mobility, resistance, and identity formation in the Northern Mexican borderlands, as it is reflected in music, clothing, and religious iconography. I draw upon a variety of ethnographic and empirical research conducted within the last 30 years which historically analyzes political initiatives, including The War on Drugs, and the North American Free Trade Act of 1994 (NAFTA), to discover how they have influenced the Mexican drug economy. This research continues to identify aesthetic expressions as evolving acts of resistance against the Mexican and United States' political structures and cross-border tensions. Narco-culture is further utilized to cope with the violent effects of narcotic politics, while simultaneously asserting a transparent narrative of marginalized borderland communities. Such proliferation of narco-cultural expressions signifies the overarching presence of the narcotics economy in citizens' lives.

Although grasping the violent and volatile U.S.-Mexican drug trafficking industry may be difficult, narco-culture provides the means to analyze it from a multi-sensorial perspective, reflecting aesthetic values in music, religious iconography, and clothing. "Drug ballads", for instance, glorify narcotic traffickers as a method of social identity and resistance for Northern Mexican citizens (Muehlmann 2014, 86). As manifestations of social identity within the Mexican borderland change over time, they evolve concurrently with neoliberal historical trajectories. For example, The War on Drugs and the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) of 1994 increased marginalization and poverty along the Mexican border. Resulting border tensions and social inequalities have been, and continue to be, culturally reflected. By portraying this illegal economy, narco-culture has historically been employed by the marginalized as a mode of resistance against the Mexican elite. Only recently has the culture extended to include defying the United States' policies and occupation. In response to governmental censorship, depictions of violence create a transparent narrative of impoverished borderland communities, enabling narco-culture to provide a subversive foundation for social mobility, resistance, and identity formation in Northern Mexico. This article will begin by discussing aesthetic elements of music, followed by manifestations of narco-culture iconography and clothing styles.

Mexican narco-culture is best understood as a category of multi-sensorial aesthetics that portrays the ubiquitous narcotic trafficking industry. The drug trade is not isolated from society, but is instead externalized through the majority's embrace of trafficking, money laundering, and industry practices as a means of survival (Muehlmann 2014, 18). As the narcotics industry permeates Northern Mexican populations, local borderland communities have responded with "perceptive experience[s]" to grapple with mass poverty, social inequality, violence, and

marginalization (Van Damme 1996, 57). Since these issues have been enhanced by border tensions, narco-cultural expressions are commonly identified as acts of subversion, identity formation, and resistance that embody the "vast aesthetic realm which potentially spans all aspects of human culture" (Van Damme 1996, 52). This article does not attempt to explain why people are involved in illicit drug trafficking, but rather explores the resulting aesthetic qualities commonly identified as modes of resistance within Northern Mexican communities.

The aesthetics of narco-culture, however, cannot be understood without first establishing a brief economic background of neoliberal policies set upon Mexico. NAFTA was instated in 1994 with the neoliberal intent to increase trade between the free capitalist markets of Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. Officially, its goal was to increase Mexican national income by "creat[ing] better paying jobs and prosperity through freer trade and an open market" (Riggs & Velk 1993, 119). These efforts backfired as NAFTA essentially invalidated the unsubsidized Mexican agricultural industry, drastically increasing migration and poverty (Muehlmann 2014, 75), and deepening economic stratifications in Northern Mexico. Additionally, freeing the trade market further encouraged drug trafficking across the border, as only a small fraction of trade goods are inspected. This mass transportation of narcotics has only enhanced domestic and cross-border frictions.

Such cross-border tensions, and corresponding militarization, have contributed to the aggrandizement of narco-culture—encouraging an inherent sense of resistance amongst the local populations to Mexican elites, and occupying American officials. The region of northern Mexico has become increasingly occupied by both local police and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), who have been cooperating as part of the American War on Drugs since 1982. This volatile relationship has created a pro-narcos sentiment amongst poorer populations, strengthening resistance to Mexican and United States authorities (Schwarz 2014). According to Muehlmann (2014), it is widely believed that the narco-economy evolved as a "deliberate and nationalistic response to the U.S. power over Mexico" (76). Mexico produces illicit drugs for the world's largest consumer, the United States, with profits of an estimated \$320 billion per year (Muehlmann 2012, 14). The narcotics industry is thus one of the few profitable sectors in the Mexican economy, which has created a reason to glorify the narcotrafficker within Northern communities. As a result, drug traffickers have become figures of social mobility within marginalized communities, as socio-economic gaps continue to widen.

The historical evolution of *Narcocorridos*, a Mexican music genre that features the narcotrafficker persona, has followed the trajectory of these border tensions and policies (Edberg 2004, 104). This genre originated as *corridos*, or folk songs, narrating the trials and tribulations of 1920s Mexican War heroes. From the height of drug trafficking in the early 1970s, this genre evolved to chronicle the stories of those involved in the drug trade, with narcotic traffickers themselves often commissioning these songs (Schwarz 2014). Certain traditional elements have remained a part of the *Narcocorridos* aesthetic; the genre still features accordions, an upbeat tempo, Ranchera inspired attire, and polka-style music reminiscent of traditional Mexican ballads. Since the early 2000s, however, the genre has additionally

portrayed dominant themes of violence, a drastic change in subject matter that coincides with cross-border conflicts (Edberg 2004, 30). According to Cook (2012), music is "a resource for understanding society" (193). Dissecting the aesthetic elements and evolution of *Narcocorridos*, therefore, may suggest how local people continue to grapple with the narcotics economy in their lives. Edberg (2004) reports that the genre is characterized by a counter-discourse and resistance to institutionalized state boundaries, labour, and oppression by the Mexican and American governments (107).

"Con puros cuernos de chivo comenzaron a tirar

Matando a Rigo al instante y a su guardia personal

Hiriendo a gente inocente que cruzaba El boulevard."

With pure 'goat's horns' [AK-47s] they began to fire

Killing Rigo instantly along with his bodyguards

Wounding innocent people who were crossing the boulevard.

- Chalino Sánchez: "Rigoberto Campos" (1991)

(Complex 2012)

These graphic lyrics act as a transparent documentation of everyday violent realities committed by authorities. The upbeat and festive tempo often contrasts the subject matter by also glorifying violence within narcotic gangs. When 3,622 homicides were processed in 2010 in the border city of Juárez (Schwarz 2014), why would people sing merrily of such injustices committed upon their own family members? The question of why people listen to *Narcocorridos* have led scholars to theorize over the function of social healing within narco-culture (Edberg 2004, 70). When combined with music videos often depicting gang violence, torture, and murder, music may serve as a movement of resistance. The *Narcocorrido* genre is one of the few uncensored forms of media that portray violence, and although the Mexican government has banned *Narcocorridos* in each state following deadly fights at concerts (CBC 2016), this has only intensified the need for their subversive message. Through the genre, communities may heal and reframe the mass violence committed, instead of adhering to pacified and censored mainstream media which does not discuss violence of the narcotics trade. One *Narcocorrido* historian, Elijah Wald, similarly argues that banning this music distracts from the issues of drug violence (CBC 2016).

The traditional live performance of *Narcocorridos* can also be explored to help understand the genre "as an irreducibly social phenomenon" that portrays the narcotrafficker persona (Cook 2012, 186). Within this relationship, the act of performance generates original

meaning in the music, much like the lyrics themselves (Cook 2012, 185). Essentially, the medium of performance conveys a deeper message of narco-culture by portraying drug traffickers as powerful figures in society. With their origin in traditional storytelling as "creative interpreter[s]" of "socially constructed narratives", performers themselves are celebrated as the narcotrafficker persona (Edberg 2004, 73). Performance is highly theatrical, actualizing the violent imagery in music videos and lyrics. For instance, the famous El Komander *Narcocorrido* group is known for brandishing a bazooka on stage while members enthusiastically pose with heavy artillery weapons (Schwarz 2014). Furthermore, portraying narcotraffickers as the "outlaw" archetype blurs the line between violence and performance, exemplified by one *Narcocorrido* singer, Ronaldo Sanchez, who shot back into the crowd after one concert goer fired a gun (Schwartz 2014). Such actions within the genre serve to further embody and dictate the aesthetic of violent discourse.

In addition to violent portrayals, the nature of performance has partially evolved from traditionally live contexts to reflect globalization and its technological impact. What originated as a genre grounded solely in performance, modern Narcocorridos are now played in "settings where tape or CD players or a radio are present" (Edberg 2004, 45). This change in consumption signifies the rapid commercialization of narco-culture; although the majority of supporters in the US are Mexican immigrants who culturally align themselves with a nationalist persona, *Narcocorridos* have recently been marketed to English speakers and popularized in the United States through mass production and sale in retailers like Walmart (Schwarz 2014). Without visual cues, however, the underlying anti-American sentiment of narco-culture music may not translate to the increasing number of Americans who listen to the genre.

As shown through music, narco-culture overwhelmingly forms the identity of the North Mexican lower class. Considering that most low-level narcotraffickers are deeply integrated with the impoverished communities from which they originate, local people who listen to *Narcocorridos* may personally associate with the violence and struggles for economic fortune much more than the Mexican elite or an American audience. Unlike other genres associated with low social class, people of all ages listen to *Narcocorridos,* leaving it only restrained by socioeconomic status (Edberg 2011, 114). As of 2004, poverty was "rampant" in Northern Mexico, and "one third greater than the national average" on the American side of the border (Edberg 2004, 28). As a result of this musical genre's origins being located within the impoverished region of the borderlands, Mexicans among the middle and upper class consider it "poor people's music", and distance themselves from the genre (Muehlmann 2014, 100). Edberg (2004) describes the genre as a representation of subaltern strata through the cultural resonance of "broader cultural themes", otherwise known as the narco-persona of empowerment and subversion of authority (115). He continues to state that "the ensuing struggle for border-area Mexicans to establish an identity in an environment of conflict" rose alongside the evolution of the *corridos* (Edberg 2011, 30).

As a result of *Narcocorridos'* role in narrating and reframing the "social bandit" persona of the original revolutionary heroes, narcotraffickers are regarded as virtuous figures within

society (Edberg 2004, 46). Driven to the industry by a lack of economic opportunities and stability, the families and communities of low-level narcotraffickers economically benefit as well. Thus narco-culture may functions as an "intoxicant of power", reminiscent of the Mexican revolution in its role as a "source of group solidarity and strength" (Edberg 2011, 77). Muehlmann (2014) describes narco-culture as a means to uplift oneself and gain autonomy and strength within marginalized conditions (67); as a result, *Narcocorridos* serve as a direct cultural and aesthetic attempt to obtain power.

This narcotrafficker persona has been further extended to include religious symbolism, symbolically elevating narcotic culture through the excessive use and manipulation of religious iconography. Evidenced by the vastly replicated iconography that has been culturally integrated, Catholicism is arguably an important aesthetic feature. The patron saint Jesús Malverde, for instance, was a bandit who stole from the rich to help the poor (Muehlmann 2014, 71). Muehlmann (2014) describes how he has been highly popularized in the North as a granter of virtuous profits from drug smuggling (71). Narco-traffickers are similarly depicted stealing from elite American drug consumers in order to help their communities. Jesús Malverde is regarded as a "guardian of the poor", and icons of him are often hung from car dashboards and around the necks of narcotic workers (Muehlmann 2014, 72). Cross-culturally, it may be difficult to understand how religion and drug smuggling are compatible; however, the entanglement of religion and drug trafficking only epitomizes the extreme role that narco-culture plays in daily life, highlighting the moral crisis often faced when the drug trade is perceived to be the only choice for economic and social mobility.

In addition to religious iconography, the narcotics industry has overwhelmingly influenced fashion. Since narco-culture in some ways symbolizes social mobility, certain associated fashions are a direct display of status and wealth. According to Turner (2012), clothing is "most specialized in the shaping and communication of personal and social identity", thus enabling individuals to embody the desirable narco-persona through the adoption of select styles popularised by drug traffickers (487). As renowned drug traffickers are not typically seen until they are publicly arrested and their image is plastered across the media, these mugshots become style icons among Northern Mexican communities, inspiring mass replication by both *Narcocorridos* singers and everyday people. However, such fashion trends have also evolved in response to post-NAFTA globalization in the last decade. As one interviewee states, only the older narcotraffickers wear alligator skin boots, while younger traffickers prefer sneakers (Muehlmann 2014, 169). What began as a 'wild west' aesthetic of cowboy boots and wide brimmed hats has now shifted to increasingly bejeweled instruments and jewelry to reflect globalized perceptions of status and social mobility. Deviating from the concept of narco-culture as resistance to the United States, this shift to Americanized fashion trends may complicate its subversive meaning.

Identity formation and resistance through music, religious symbolism, and clothing signifies an interesting narrative dichotomy. While narco-culture continues to evolve alongside cross-border tensions and globalization, this creates the potential for multi-sensorial aesthetic

elements like *Narcocorridos* to stray from their original roots and no longer serve as a symbol of Mexican nationalism. This question of meaning derives from the increasing American influence on status symbols within the culture's "social skin" (Turner 2012, 487); the music actively resists the United States, yet popular fashions emulate American styles. Due to the fact that narco-culture is inherently resistant against the American elite, incorporation of American trends may seem contradictory. Interpretively, however, narco-culture encourages Mexicans to socioeconomically emulate American fashions as an expression of status and social mobility.

These manifestations of narco-culture have truly reflected how the drug economy affects the everyday lives of marginalized people in Northern Mexico. Considering its relevance to current border tensions, one may theorize that music and religious iconography will continue to reflect and portray violence caused by the narcotics industry. However, as U.S. President Trump continues to administer stricter border policies, a new reality for drug mobility may affect narco-culture in the future; one can speculate that the evolution of *Narcocorridos'* subject matter will relate more and more to the increasingly difficult environment of cross-border trafficking. Indeed, as globalization increases, the dialogue between economic and political pressures will continue to transform cultural expressions. Considering how diversely narco-culture is aesthetically reflected through music, religious iconography and clothing, it is apparent that the narcotics economy does not exist in a vacuum, and that it does, in fact, greatly influence the lives of everyday Northern Mexicans in a multi-sensorial fashion.

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"Why White People love Wade Davis"

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Abstract: This paper adopts and applies Audra Simpson's (2014) analytical methodology from the work "Why White People Love Franz Boas" to Wade Davis' ethnographic work, *The Wayfinders* (2009). It aims to investigate the role of storytelling in presenting ethnographic accounts, and the ways in which literary fluidity, hyperbole, and audience come together to create and perpetuate standards within anthropological literature.

Introduction

"In a lecture hall that can seat roughly 600 students, there's maybe a total of 200 kids filling the room - all eager to hear him speak. Perfect posture but leaning slightly, universally indicating "all ears", or you know, "teacher's pet". It's Anthropology 100 and anyone who has taken his class knows you don't realllly need to be doing the assigned readings. He'll narrate them for you and truthfully, he insists on it...

He steps up to the podium, adjusts the microphone to a desired height and his voice begins to illuminate a story. It truly is something magical. With his poetically deep tone and perfect enunciation, it's nothing but captivating... It's meant to make you feel. But when I reflect on some of my very first exposures to ethnographic work, should it have been?"

...

In reading the work of Audra Simpson's "Why White People love Franz Boas" I was immediately intrigued. It sparked a personal reflection which I have continued to mull over to this day. Namely, that perhaps there are narratives in ethnographic work which need to be challenged, and yet are blatantly overlooked. Furthermore, that perhaps this phenomenon was occurring around me, at a much more local and contemporary level. By taking a critical approach via personal reflection and the voices of fellow students, it made sense to apply a similar methodological analysis to Wade Davis' work, *The Wayfinders* (2009). Davis has been widely regarded as a modern day 'Father of Anthropology', or at least, referenced within UBC's anthropological curriculum as such. This paper investigates the effects of ethnographic work as storytelling within Davis' *Wayfinders*, specifically, where his research falls short. It will approach the issue by drawing parallels to other notable ethnographic works, and anthropological theories such as Franz Boas' cultural relativism, and Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalism, will challenge, caution and propose solutions for the future. The purpose of this paper is *not* to rip apart a body of research, but rather, to challenge the ways in which Davis chooses to present his anthropological work. As anthropologists, we recognize the importance of never getting too comfortable in our position as researchers; we must remain cautious in our methodology, respectful of the voices involved, and understand the implications associated with telling one's story.

Methodology

The structure of this paper is influenced by the case analysis of Simpson's *Why White People Love Franz Boas*, and applies a similar 'critical-eye' to Wade Davis' best-selling work *The Wayfinders*—including the different mediums through which he presents his ethnographic accounts. I begin with a personal (student) account of my own exposure to Davis' teaching of ANTH 100: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. Following this, I discuss how Davis' 2003 TEDTalk illustrates the importance of presentation and stylistic choice when narrating ethnographic accounts. Lastly, the paper presents a literary analysis and passage comparison of Bronislaw Malinowski's *The Argonauts* alongside Davis' *Wayfinders*. By applying both a literary and anthropological critique, I argue for the use of a dual-model approach to strengthen future contestations in the representation of stories within ethnography.

Where do I fit in? A brief of my own exposure to UBC's Anthropology 100 class

Looking back at my first exposure to the discipline of Anthropology at UBC, I specifically remember the variation of my first semester course load. I had enrolled in six classes—one of them being Wade Davis' ANTH 100: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology—and they each touched on different sub-disciplines of the field. Included in these six courses, were John Barker's ANTH 210: Eating culture, and Alexia Bloch's ANTH 213: Anthropology of Sex and Gender. I find it necessary to disclose these course themes, as I am certain that they not only fuelled my passion for the discipline, but created a critical eye towards Davis' introductory course, having enrolled in more theory-based classes.

Lectures for ANTH 100 fell on Mondays and Wednesdays, with Friday tutorials led by one of his four teaching assistants. It was a massive class, and because of this I distinctly remember looking around a crowded lecture hall, and being surprised by the amount of academic variation exhibited by the students (i.e. those enrolled in science, engineering, psychology, etc). However, they were all much like me—sitting on the edge of their seat, patiently waiting for our always-buzzing professor to bring us on one of his journeys. He never spoke of anything beyond the pages of his book, and he spoke of them with the utmost passion. And it was this that puzzled me—that in an introductory course, Wade Davis was doing exactly what all of my second year professors had cautioned against in the very first weeks of class: be aware of anthropologists who speak strictly from a first person account about others, those who sensationalize and hyperbolize experiences, and who fail to recognize the fragility of positioning oneself as a voice in ethnography.

Who is the audience?

Questioning "who is the audience?" calls for a response to the anthropological voice. In the context of this paper, this will apply to both a classroom, and broader public setting. For this

reason, I engage with my own personal experiences, and those of my fellow peers who were enrolled in Davis' introductory course, alongside Davis' feature in the February 2003 TEDTalk. Both settings reflect exclusively on his work, and subsequent presentation of *The Wayfinders*.

An introductory course like ANTH 100 is the result of what the department deems as constituting the foundations of Anthropology. This structural boundary subjects a specific "type" of anthropology to students, which, if successfully received, will ensure that they continue in their studies. Lacking any base of anthropological theory–or even knowing where to take a critical approach–creates the ideal formula for why Wade Davis is a highly successful first year professor. Rather than challenge his audience, Davis captivates and presents the fundamental theories of cultural anthropology.

But how does it really work? The answer is in Davis' almost flawless and charismatic combination of skill, as he orates his lectures–through the intonation of his voice, hand gestures, etc. In other words, all of the tools that make for captivating storytelling. Furthermore, he positions an account or lecture as something accessible, and *very* readable. Overly complicated language is avoided, yet simple and eloquent stitching of prose-like script presents itself as a poetic piece. Think, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*– where excessive use of adjectives creates a vivid atmosphere and setting to a story which could otherwise easily read as bland.

To illustrate a general consensus from undergraduate students–not limited to anthropology majors and/or minors–I compiled a short series of anonymous student reviews regarding Wade Davis' ANTH 100 course over the last three years. Using the public, online database *RatemyProfessors* (commonly referred to as *RatemyProf*), students are provided a platform to publicly post any feedback or remarks regarding a specific course and its associated professor.

~Below: Table 1- RatemyProf reviews are displayed in order of 'most-recent' and descend~

DATE:	RANKING (1-5):	REVIEW:
10/25/2018	Overall Quality = 5	*"Wade is the most inspiring professors I have ever studied under! His lectures are simply him telling you of his time immersed within certain cultures as if he's telling a story."*
04/18/2018	Overall Quality = 2	*"He's very passionate about anthropology, but he's so monotone. Also almost all the readings are his own books and I looked into some of his research, specifically the one about Haitian zombies, and his work is widely refuted on this topic yet he continues to teach it…"*
09/14/2017	Overall Quality = 5	*"Wade was by far the best professor I had in my first year at UBC. He's incredibly smart, interesting, and literally changed the way I looked at the world. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to be taught by Wade."*
12/11/2016	Overall Quality = 5	*"Super inspirational and he tries with every lecture to truly send out a message to his students. Probably the most qualified professor at UBC, wade was so inspirational and knowledgeable. I would recommend this course to anyone as it is truly eye opening and insightful."*

12/22/2015	Overall Quality = 3.5	*"Wade Davis is an extremely inspirational man, and as his student, I looked forward to hearing about his personal experiences with cultures around the world, each with a moral and a lesson. By the end of the course, however, as he'll explain, there are a few big ones which tie each story together."*

Interestingly enough, the reviews align with many of my own reflections from his class. Common 'tags' (a term used to succinctly categorize a word term for easy searching) applied to his teaching style were the following: Inspirational (25), Amazing lectures (17), Respected (12)—parentheses indicating the frequency of use on a tag. Regardless of the reviewees academic discipline, the table demonstrates a common sentiment towards Wade Davis as an anthropologist, and ANTH100 as an academic course.

Wade Davis x *TED Talk*

"With stunning photos and stories, National Geographic Explorer Wade Davis celebrates the extraordinary diversity of the world's indigenous cultures, which are disappearing from the planet at an alarming rate" (TEDTalk 2003). Subtle, or…? TEDTalk's promotion not only fuels the agenda of mobilizing knowledge but has resulted in Davis' feature closing in at over 3.2 million views.

The talk begins with Davis stitching together a rather profound and lengthy introductory statement—as he always seems to make room for—and immediately dives into 'storytelling mode'. With passion and charisma carrying through his voice, he begins to reflect on his time spent in Penan and the forests of Borneo, with the Voodoo acolytes in Haidi, and with the Kogu of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Northern Colombia. Passages like the following are the 'norm' for these captivating lectures, and honestly it's quite difficult to not become tangled up in its vivid narration:

"…at the end of this amazing initiation, one day they're suddenly taken out and for the first time in their lives, at the age of 18, they see a sunrise. And in that crystal moment of awareness of first light, as the Sun begins to bathe the slopes of the stunningly beautiful landscape, suddenly everything they have learned in the abstract is affirmed in stunning glory" (Davis 2003).

He talks of what he defines as the *ethnosphere*, or, the 'social web of life'. It can be characterized as the sum of all thoughts and intuitions, myths and beliefs, ideas and inspirations brought into being by the human imagination since the dawn of consciousness. "A legacy and product of our dreams, an embodiment of our hopes, the symbol of all we are and all that we, as adaptive species, have created" (Davis 2003). Without a need for a closer unpacking, there is a clear reference to the term, 'we'—a recurring theme discussed in the paragraphs to follow. The application of a universal voice, or speaking of a concept on behalf of a universally 'known' fact is not an uncommon theme in Davis' work. But why does he do it? Perhaps the answer lies

within the desire to seek universalities, and to 'tie up the major stories' he recounts (see Table 1, student *RatemyProfs* reviews). Nonetheless, it calls into question, who is Wade Davis speaking for?

Stuart Hall unpacks the concept of '*who needs identity'* as one which emerges "within the play of specific modalities of power… more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity" than an 'identity' in its traditional meaning (that is, an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation)" (Hall 1996). Evidently and ironically, this is quite the opposite to the application Davis adopts in his universal claim. Yet, the question of 'who is he speaking for' still remains ambiguous. And if this is the case, does the *ethnosphere* really exist theoretically?

On applying "Why White People Love Franz Boas" to *The Wayfinders*

"Why White People love Franz Boas" is an unpacking by Audra Simpson which looks at Boas' understandings of race and culture within his work *The Mind of Primitive Man*. Simpson draws particular attention to the social ideals, theoretical and political implications of his 1911 application, highlighting areas in which his work is "far from the revolutionary of paradigm-shifting text it has been hailed as" (Simpson 2018). She suggests that as anthropologists, there exists a need to accept colonialism as a framework. That colonialism should be revered *not only* as an event, but a structure still shaping the present. Much like the aims of my own analysis of Wade Davis' work, Simpson's goal is similar. It is not to rip apart a piece of anthropological work, but to instead engage with a critical approach, and suggest "further conceptual and political attention regarding the dispossession of Indigenous peoples" (Simpson 2018).

As Boas' work was in response to the work of Lewis Henry Morgan and his theory of social evolutionism (ordering the world's peoples through a cultural hierarchy *to* inform theories of difference), he proposes an erasure of 'indigeneity' entirely. And rather than liberating Indigenous people from colonialism, *The Mind of the Primitive Man* establishes a dualistic binary of value for cultural and bodily differences, and their presumed vitality (Simpson 2018). A dialog is created surrounding *who* is worthy of salvage, sympathy, and to quote from Simpson, incorporation (in the sense of equality). In short, "his ethnological move was to break into a locality and gesture toward meaning—to imagine that the forms of life he studied and witnessed were, indeed, different, driven by their own logic… and understood on their own terms, *but ought* to be explained by recourse to a preexisting cultural world" (Simpson 2018). Mimicking this, one may refer to Davis' coined term, ethnosphere, which is defined as the "sum of all thoughts and intuitions… ideas and inspirations brought into being by the human imagination… the symbol of all we are and that we, as adaptive species, have created" (Davis 2009). Tthe introductory statement from his feature TEDTalk reveals a similar, underlying tone of salvage anthropology and the sympathetic paradigm—"… what I'd like to do with you today is sort of take you on a brief journey through the ethnosphere, to try to begin to give you a sense of

what in fact is being lost... there are many of us who sort of forget that when I say "different ways of being," I really do mean different ways of being" (Davis, TEDTalk 2003).

In the eyes of Boas, defining culture meant removing one's sentiments from analysis in an *objective* effort to understand many groups of people, and instead "solv[ing] on the basis of scientific knowledge, not emotional clamor" (Boas 1922). Cultural relativism outlines that cultures cannot be objectively ranked as higher or lower, or better or more correct, but that all humans see the world through the lens of their own culture, and judge it according to their own culturally acquired norms. It is to understand the way in which culturally conditioned people understand and interact with the world in different ways (Simpson 2018). Yet, this is not entirely devoid of anthropological assumption or bias. Claims such as "without any doubt, Indian blood flows in the veins of quite a number of our people, but the proportion is so insignificant that it may well be disregarded" (Boas 1922), could still be made, regardless of an awareness of cultural relativism. Similarly, Wade Davis states: "wherever you look around the world, you discover that these are not cultures destined to fade away; these are dynamic living peoples being driven out of existence by identifiable forces that are beyond their capacity to adapt to..." (Davis, TEDTalk 2003). Clearly, these sentiments reveal that indigenous communities are either lumped—to a degree—into a weak, possessed group, or, seen as insignificant to individual readership on a whole. At its core, this is no different from Morgan typologizing to understand (considering the racial and biological discourses lending themselves to belief in a structure of disappearance). Instead, Boas and Davis create their *own* discourse of 'difference' by flipping its connotation. Consequently, this idea sits on the surface, in polar opposition to Morgan, but nonetheless continues to perpetuate an ideal 'type' for the indigenous person. The colonial voice becomes inexplicitly and/or unintentionally echoed throughout one's own set of assumptions regarding indigeneity.

One may wonder if this could be solved via a subaltern studies framework—but is it really that simple? Not quite. The subaltern is defined as those who have been left outside the political system, and are not part of civil society. Since subaltern politics are about inverting and transforming order (i.e. cultural, political, and economic, or 'changing the status quo') (Chatterjee 2012), the existence of a subaltern also runs the risk of creating fixed a boundary of identity one may inappropriately ascribe to. The concept of governing oneself, or self-representation, cannot be ascribed to by anyone but the subaltern individual. However, anthropologists and/or ethnographers engaging in theories like the subaltern run the risk of labelling a person or group of people for the sake of understanding on a universal level. Hence we end up on the same cycle we sought to escape by creating categories, typologies, or even umbrella terms to seek out a commensality, i.e. universalities. This is dangerous and in doing so, anthropologists would only continue to lump the marginalized and racialized together, or even create a 'false' subaltern.

Wade Davis x *The Wayfinders* & Bronsilaw Malinowski's *The Argonauts*

From the analysis above, Boas' celebrity status as the modern day 'Father of Anthropology' is rooted in acknowledging the growth from, and radical opposition to the work of Henry Lewis Morgan. He is praised by his own hands-on approach to ethnography and stylistic differences in documenting culture (rejecting cultural sequencing, and assigning temporal typology to material objects, political structure, etc.) (Simpson 2018). However, this does not imply that the work of Boas was, or *is,* perfect. Likewise, Davis' *Wayfinders*—a national bestseller—resonates with the general public for similar appraisals: his hands-on and immersive approach to ethnography, story-telling, and ability to bring 'life' into the voices he narrates.

I stand with Simpson in acknowledging that *nothing really new* emerges from the canon of anthropological thought, but that instead, Boas applies what is already understood within the canon and fits these theories to a new lens. Simply put, the same ideas continue to be perpetuated, and yet the context which they are subject to change. Now apply this theory to Davis. The paragraph below presents a series of passage analyses which compare Wade Davis', *The Wayfinders* to the work of Malinowski's, *The Argonauts* (Chapter Four: "On Sailing and Canoes"). The purpose of a passage comparison is to re-evaluate the existing colonial voice, unintentional or otherwise. This can be expressed through romanticizing experiences, and sensationalizing, or even hyperbolizing first-hand accounts and observations to captivate a reader, or to make sense of one's field observations. Below, I present three short excerpts which exhibit an overlap in ethnographic style and 'storytelling'. Note, that Davis' excerpts are prefixed "D:" while Malinowski is prefixed "M:" (mimicking a dialog/conversation-reply style):

Passage 1:

D: "Why study the Polynesians? Their story reveals numerous issues and misconceptions that fuel our assumptions: courage of exploration, "the brilliance of human adaptation, the dark impact of conquest and colonialism. Knowledge is rarely completely divorced from power, and interpretation is too often an expression of convenience" (Davis 2009).
M: "For a craft, whether of bark or wood, iron or steel, lives in the life of its sailors, and it is more to a sailor than a mere bit of shaped matter. To the native, not less than to the whiteseaman, a craft is surrounded by an atmosphere of romance, built up of tradition and of personal experience… a living thing possessing its own individuality" (Malinowski 1932).

Passage 2:

D: "The sky was still clear, the ocean black, the heavens dominated by the innumerable silences of the stars. The *Hokule'a* lumbered into the swells, which were moderate, but still strong…The crew worked in two-hour shifts, with everyone taking a turn at the helm" (Davis 2009).
M: "It is a precarious but delightful sensation to sit in the slender body, while the canoe darts on with the float raised… water constantly breaking over… carried across on the sea on a sort of suspended raft, gliding over the waves in a manner almost uncanny" (Malinowski 1932).

Passage 3:

D: "There is a strong sense throughout the islands that as long as the *Hokule'a* sails the culture of the navigator will survive. Nainoa's entire mission in life is to ensure this happens. He refers to *Hokule'a* as both a sacred canoe and the spaceship of the ancestors... if you took all of the genius that has allowed us to put a man on the moon and applied it to an understanding of the ocean, what you would get is Polynesia" (Davis 2009).

M: "...to the native his cumbersome, sprawling canoe is a marvelous, almost miraculous achievement, and a thing of beauty... a powerful contrivance for the mastery of Nature, which allows him to cross the perilous seas to distant places... And it is in this emotional attitude of the natives towards their canoes that I see the deepest ethnographic reality, which must guide us right through the study of other aspects (Malinowski 1932).

Evidently, both anthropologists share similarities in their ethnographic work. Malinowski and Davis place emphasis on the 'particular' through their own *lived* experiences, adopting the foundations of scientific research to draw truth in what is 'seen' and what is 'recorded'. Where Malinowski focuses on functionalism to reconstruct the 'skeleton' of society, Davis utilizes his sensorial experience to capture a setting through participant observation. Both make for a captivating and exciting account; however, it forces an erasure of the individual versus institution. The reader is subjected to a temporally bound experience, and expected to accept a recorded experience as static knowledge. As a result, it runs a great risk of perpetuating an ahistorical product of anthropological theory. This allows minimal room to engage in cultural change or future work, and instead, continues to shape a colonial, salvage paradigm.

The result is that one runs the risk of conducting 'bad' ethnography. Simpson's (2014) discussion on ethnographic refusal highlights that "techniques of knowing are predicated upon a profound 'need' "... Furthermore, it's the distribution of power which makes Empire possible that also comes into play for the documentary requirements of administrative readership to be successful (Simpson 2014). It is only fitting to bring this topic into discussion as I argue for a re-analysis of current anthropological work, like Wade Davis' *Wayfinders*. I propose that anthropologists step back, and re-evaluate what is really being valued at the forefront of ethnographic accounts: easy readership, and mass dissemination of accessible literature, or, a decolonized approach which facilitates the voices of those who desire to be heard? And in saying this, Anthropology will need to do more than simply locate and recognize where our work falls short. It must be continuously contested, continuously critiqued, in order to better our sense of understanding, and 'doing' of the discipline. If these realizations fail to move beyond paper, then anthropologists are choosing to limit the scope and power of their work. And if this is the case, why even do ethnography or study anthropology at all?

Conclusion

From the initial pages of this paper, the question of "why do white people love Wade Davis" appears almost unnecessarily critical, and fueled with distaste. However, the question ultimately reveals that there are avenues where anthropology can continue to grow, particularly in regards to storytelling. By applying this framework to Wade Davis' popular work, *The Wayfinders,* it calls for anthropologists to approach ethnographic work with a critical eye, even those which are widely accepted, and even celebrated. It is equally important to challenge

anthropological theory as it is to challenge methodology, assumptions, presentation, and the position of the anthropologist in relation to all four factors. In short, we can only know what we know from confirming what we *don't*. Thus, acknowledging gaps in our position *as* ethnographers creates the necessary repositioning to treat anthropological work on a case-by-case basis, and to create stronger works, as opposed to assuming there is a correct methodology and/or set of questions to pose from a 'foundational knowledge' which ultimately underestimates the power inherent in recounting a voice which is not one's own. Without such reflexivity, the discipline of anthropology will only continue to perpetuate a vicious cycle of privilege, unintentional or otherwise.

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The common language of "fandom:": Kabuki as a cultural unifier

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Abstract: This essay will discuss what was arguably the first ever pop culture phenomenon to emerge in Japan: the *kabuki*. *Kabuki* is a Japanese performance style that involves both acting and dance, and is characterized by its unique aesthetic, musical and plot stylings. *Kabuki* served as a uniting cultural force throughout its history, leaving a lasting impression on Japanese culture as a whole. This essay will focus on the Edo period, as it was during this time that the modern modes of *kabuki* emerged, including the actor and theatre aesthetic. It will focus on *kabuki* within the city of Edo, with reference to the many travelling and stationary theatre companies, as well as on gender as a recurring theme.

Kabuki began as entertainment for the lower classes, but the themes that it presented, as well as its distinct visuals, captivated the attention of not only its intended audience, but that of the upper classes as well, ultimately serving as a social unifier within the disparate Edo of the Tokugawa Era[1]. While *kabuki* faced persecution by both art critics and government authorities, it nevertheless persisted, possibly due to the cultural unification it provided. *Kabuki* originated in the 17th century (1609 is the agreed-upon start date, an oddly specific date and circumstance that will be discussed later on), and was cemented as a form of low-class theatre from conception. The subject matter was crass and hypersexual, and the surrounding environment—including the venues where performances occurred, and the content of the performances themselves—involved unsavory social elements such as gambling and prostitution, the latter being further illustrated by the fact that the actors were women (Shively 2001, 34). The performances were originally nothing more than a series of short skits strung together, with little emphasis on plot or artistry, though this would change as the artform developed (Satoko 2016, 6).

In its early development, *kabuki* was often juxtaposed with *noh* (Tsubaki 2001, 4), another similar form of theatre and dance performance. *Noh*, unlike *kabuki*, was considered high-class, and cultured (Shively 2001, 33). *Noh* audiences were exclusively high-class lords and samurai, as opposed to the artisan and merchant audiences of *kabuki* (Shively 2001, 33). Moreover, *noh* theatre was more culturally valued, and more critically acclaimed—although, according to Shively, it was static and unchanging, and not intended to be entertaining (2001, 33). Evidently, the creators of *noh* valued their art more than what the audience thought of it (Tsubaki 2001, 3). *Kabuki*, on the other hand, was made for the lower classes, and as such, it was allowed a certain degree of freedom that the *noh* performances did not have.

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[1] As we begin, a note on naming conventions—this paper alternates between the terms "Edo period" and "Tokugawa era" when describing the time period from the mid 17th to 19th centuries. After the emperor was usurped, the Tokugawa Shogunate was instated, and the capital moved from Kyoto to Edo.

Kabuki performances did not strive for complexity or enlightened plot; instead, their purpose was simply to entertain an audience (Leiter 2001, xx). This audience, especially initially, was composed of mainly men, and were predominantly unemployed samurai/soldiers (Shively 2001, 34). They succeeded brilliantly in their primary objective, as *kabuki* was regarded as extremely entertaining (Tsubaki 2001, 7), combining sexual themes with supernatural elements and fantastical plots. It was less realistic than *noh*, and more emotionally charged (Shively 2001, 33).

Perhaps the most important difference between *kabuki* and *noh* is the fact that Kabuki is not static but mutable, and has changed in many distinct ways since its inception. As the years went by, *kabuki* came to adopt a striking visual aesthetic that was much different from its original performance style (Lee 2001, 362). Key themes shifted over the years, plot structure changed, and even the theatre architecture was transformed. *Kabuki* is a dynamic art form, and it has always been allowed to be so—as it had no reputation to lose by taking risks in terms of content or staging. *Kabuki* did not have to worry about becoming less respectable, as it was already disreputable from the beginning.

One can infer that *Kabuki* became popular because it was entertaining, and because it catered to what audiences wanted to see. The aspect of sex via prostitution—a large part of the culture surrounding these performances—played an important role in linking the job of actors[2] with the concept of sex. Regardless of their gender or biological sex, the actors were depicted in a sexual manner that invited the audience to view them as "women,". The actors, who may or may not have been biological women, were regarded not as attainable love object but rather as elevated icons to be worshipped or revered (Shively 2001, 35). Men would devote great sums of money to the theatres and actors who caught their eye (Shively 2001, 35), but they did not necessarily aspire to be in relationships with the actors they idolized (Matsudaira 2001, 122). In fact, to actually fall in love with an actor was considered taboo by *kabuki* fans, suggesting a complicated dynamic between actors and their fans which is not neatly categorized (Matsudaira 2001, 122).

From its very origins, *kabuki* was a cultural nexus, surrounded by other elements of culture. *Kabuki* was not simply a performance, but part of a complex series of interconnected social practices (Leiter 2001, xxiv). During the Edo period, this social web grew to encompass a sizeable portion of society, including vendors, merchants and bookmakers (Matsudaira 2001, 122). *Kabuki* was a cultural arena in which people from various classes could mix (Satoko 2016, 56)—perhaps the only one of its kind within Tokugawa era Edo. The theatres themselves were located within Edo for almost the entire Tokugawa era, only moving to Asakusa—a suburb of the city—in the mid-19th century after a series of fires (Satoko 2016, 44). *Kabuki* theatres eventually added on teahouses, drinking establishments, and hotels, where actors and courtesans could entertain patrons (Shively 2001, 46). Theatre companies would commission

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[2] It is important to note that papers I referenced used actor rather than actress, and I have endeavored to keep using the gender neutral term.

ukiyo-e prints of their actors to sell to fans, and today, the majority of the remaining *ukiyo-e* prints are of these actors (Ryoko 2013, 215). These prints were sometimes used as promotional material for specific plays, and other times were vanity prints for the actors to sell to fans (Matsudaira 2001, 121). These portrait prints were referred to as *nigao* (Ryoko 2013, 215). These promotions were similar to how marketing works in a contemporary context; for example, movie posters feature actors, but the posters promote the movie, and there are also posters featuring the actors themselves.

This is not to say that *kabuki* was welcomed into society. *Kabuki*, especially during the Edo period, was persecuted as it was thought to be a toxic presence in society (Shively 2001, 38). The various restrictions imposed on *kabuki* will be examined later on, but let it be known for now that the cultural clout *kabuki* had was not unchallenged. It was heavily critiqued, considered a lesser art form (Tsubaki 2001, 7) and was challenged by authorities—considered a "causer of calamaties" (Shively 2001, 35). However, rather than diminishing *kabuki*, it is speculated that these restrictions actually helped it to become the art form it is today (Shively 2001, 54) The bans forced *kabuki* to become more refined, and prevented it from relying on the sexual, vaudevillian themes present in its early iteration.

In spite of these challenges and criticisms, *kabuki* persisted. The enduring quality of *kabuki* raises the question: could all of the persecution *kabuki* faced actually be part of its appeal? The covertness, the persecution—perhaps these things made it more alluring to its workaday audiences. High-class patrons were forbidden to attend, and yet, they did, sitting in screened off boxes so that their identities were concealed (Shively 2001, 46). Women, forbidden from entering theatres, would wait outside *kabuki* theatres hoping for a glimpse of the actors (Shively 2001, 46). Was this because *kabuki* was entrancing in its own rights, or was it that *kabuki* was forbidden—and therefore, exciting—that made it more attractive?

Whatever the reason behind its popularity, there is no doubt that *kabuki* was hugely popular. During the Tokugawa era, it was this acclaim that gave the people of Edo a common language: the language of *kabuki* fans. Edo during the Tokugawa era was unique. The populace were not linked by any shared history (Satoko 2016, 56), and lacked the social cohesion that was present in other towns and cities. Edo was truly a unique city in that it had a blend of various classes—from aristocrats and samurai, to commoners and monks (Satoko 2016, 56). Edo during the Tokugawa era was a military city; there were a huge number of samurai and other soldiers who were unemployed, wealthy and, quite frankly, bored. It was this samurai class that became the target demographic for *kabuki*, and many plays were catered towards them. This led to many *kabuki* plays emphasizing historic battles, a theme which has had many interesting long term effects.

Samurai were not the only ones who were deeply involved in the world of *kabuki*. There were a great number of *kabuki* fan clubs present during the Edo period. These fan clubs, known as *Hiiki Renchu,* could be dedicated to a theatre company or to a single actor, and there were

strict rules within these clubs—strikingly similar to the Samurai code, dictating the behaviour of its members (Matsudaira 2001, 118). Elaborate costumes were worn by members of *Hiiki* when attending *kabuki* performances, and even outside of the theatre members would wear crests showing who they supported. Actor crests were often flowers; for example, Kichisaburo (a popular actor) had for his symbol a wild orange (Matsudaira 2001, 119). One such rule was that fans could only support one actor or theatre company at a time—one could not have "two masters" as it were (Matsudaira 2001, 118). Popular actors from different companies were thought of as "rivals," and the fans of each actor would see the other fans as enemies (Matsudaira 2001, 119). These rivalries were not restricted to the theatres and also extended into everyday life.

The rivalries between actors, or actor's *hiiki*, became a common language of Edo (Matsudaira 2001, 120). Restaurants would use actors as promotions, publicly displaying the symbol of a popular actor and refusing to service fans of his rival (Matsudaira 2001, 120). Fan books and *ukiyo-e* prints depicting *kabuki* actors or performances were hugely popular, as mentioned earlier. The artists who made these prints were exempt from the strict code of the *hiiki*, as their jobs required them to see many actors. These artists were seen as neutral go-betweens, never fully supporting one actor over another (Matsudaira 2001, 119). *Yakusha Hyobanki*, or "Criticisms of Actors", that ranked the actors according to looks and talent were also common throughout the Edo period (Mastudaira 2001, 117.) These prints in particular confirmed *kabuki* as visual media, and were yet another way for *kabuki* to increase in popularity.

As mentioned earlier, *kabuki* did not flourish without opposition. This opposition came in many forms, but the form that will be discussed within this paper is the ways in which the government regulated it. In general, most of the bans and regulations placed on *kabuki* were restrictive (Shively 2001, 41). The material allowed in *kabuki* plays was confined exclusively to the past; no play could be done on contemporary material. Many playwrights found ways around this ban, by setting their plays in the past, and naming the characters after historic figures, but having them mirror contemporary events—much like the English Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare. There were restrictions on what was allowed for theatre architecture—no ornate boxes for high-class patrons to sit in so as not to be seen, no hidden corridors between theatre boxes and backstage to allow liaisons between actors and theatre-goers, and no roofs (Shively 2001, 50). What the actors could or could not wear was also regulated; brocade and other fine fabrics were not allowed for use in *kabuki* costumes (Shively 2001, 46).

The ways the actors presented themselves, not only in costume but in the social role they occupied, was also regulated. In 1629, a ban was issued which prohibited women from performing *kabuki,* as an attempt to end the prostitution linked with performances (Leiter 2001, xxi). This ban did not have its intended effect. Male performers (specifically those who played women roles, known as *onnagata*) simply took up the mantle of prostitution. One source suggested that there had been male performers playing women's roles since the inception of *kabuki*, so it was not a huge transition from all-women performances to all male companies.

(Tsubaki 2001, 9 and Leiter 2001, xxi). Another example of a regulation of the actors is the Forelock ban, which prevented male performers from growing out their forelocks (Shively 2001, 39). This prevented them from looking too feminine; and symbolically robbed them of their femininity. People believed that once an actor lost his forelocks all his feminine appeal was gone; he was no longer convincing when he played a woman. Actors soon began covering their shaved heads with scarves, which then became wigs—defeating the purpose of the ban (Shively 2001, 39).

   The reason for these restrictions was twofold: *kabuki* was visually compelling, and by limiting the materials that the theatre companies were allowed to use the authorities hoped to lessen the pronounced aesthetic of *kabuki*. The second reason was that *kabuki* was considered lower class, and couldn't be seen as reaching above its rank. Using rich materials in costuming or in theatre design could be interpreted as an attempt by *kabuki* to aspire beyond its low-class origins (Shively 2001, 46). This was a socially destabilizing idea, especially in the Tokugawa era with its rigid class structure. Despite this antagonistic attitude toward *kabuki* by officials, it was never fully eradicated (Satoko 2016, 43). These restrictions were also very rarely rigorously enforced—typically, only when a moralistic shogun was ruling (Shively 2001, 53). Perhaps the reason that *kabuki* was allowed to continue was due to the unifying role it performed. *Kabuki* provided the people of Edo a common cultural language, through *kabuki* 'fandom.' *Kabuki* also provided the people of Edo with a shared history.

   As mentioned earlier, *kabuki* playwrights were prohibited from putting on plays that dealt with contemporary matters (Shively 2001, 51, Satoko 2016, 41). While some playwrights found ways around this restriction, many simply complied with it. As such, this rule did not truly limit the scope of *kabuki*, but merely refocused it (Satoko 2016, 41). Much like the other restrictions imposed on the art form, it made *kabuki* develop a particular style; in this case, taking the events of the past, and interpreting them for a contemporary audience. It created a shared history and brought the past to the present (Satoko 2016, 42). This historic influence was a huge draw for *kabuki* patrons. It catered to a demographic and established "historic" superiority of samurai by taking historic military events and making them epics—filling them with the supernatural in the form of demons and ghosts (Satoko 2016, 60). This concept of bringing the past to the present—or, as Satoko puts it, of "presenting the past" (2016, 41)—is key to understanding the influence of *kabuki*. All *kabuki* plays were set in the past, but they were simultaneously contemporary. The most popular character used in Edo plays, Sukerou, was a 12th century samurai, but was almost always costumed in a black kimono—the garb of a samurai from the Edo period (Satoko 2016, 39). This "presenting" of the past made it easy for the people of Tokugawa era to relate to historic events. By using the past as the main source for performance material, *kabuki* essentially recrafted history into a narrative.

   This can even be seen in the origins of *kabuki*. The events of this art form's beginnings are highly specific, claiming that *kabuki* originated when a shrine dancer named Okuni danced on a dry riverbed. Is this story true, or has the story simply been told and retold so many times that, even though it is not entirely factual, it has acquired a new sort of truth? The development

of *kabuki* is shown to have been a steady kind of growth, neatly transitioning from one form to another until the Genroku era, and the first appearances of modern *kabuki*. Satoko (2016) draws attention to how unlikely this pattern of growth is, and invites the reader to question the validity of this timeline (45). The more likely situation, he claims, is that *kabuki* developed in fits and starts, and since there is not a lot of evidence left over from these eras, *kabuki* scholars have created a neat timeline to map events onto (2016, 45).

This essay is far from exhaustive. *Kabuki* is an incredibly extensive topic, and has maintained key roles in many important cultural movements not covered here. The militaristic themes that were introduced in the Edo period to satisfy the samurai patrons can be seen as influencing the Japanese consciousness, and encouraging the Imperialist sentiment that led to Japan's involvement with World War II (Brandon 2014, 103). There is a complicated gender history that is present due to the long ban of women actors in *kabuki,* which has led many *kabuki* connoisseurs to view female actors as less feminine than *onnagata*[3] (Shively 2001, 53). There is simply too much to say, and not enough space to say it in.

One reason that *kabuki* is so extensive, is that it was never simply a performance art, but instead a web of cultural practices and events. *Kabuki* grew to be a unifying cultural phenomenon, and a common language which transcended class—the language of *kabuki* fans. It provided disparate populations with a shared history through its presentation of the past. *Kabuki* was, and is, a cultural phenomenon, but even more than that *kabuki* is a culture in and of itself. It is a powerful force that has defined and shaped Japanese culture throughout its existence. With this in mind, it is important to remember that *kabuki* is not an artefact of the past. This paper has focused on the history of *kabuki*, but it would be remiss to not address the fact that *kabuki* still plays a role in Japan's present. It continues to influence culture in new ways; plays are still put on, and the aesthetic is still very present and powerful in Japanese culture. Other forms of pop culture, such as anime, manga, music videos, and video games all draw on *kabuki* aesthetic or themes. *Kabuki* is not a dead thing, but a powerful force still actively influencing the present.

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[3] Male-bodied actors who played women's roles. Their performances were hyper-feminine. Parallels can be drawn between this and modern Western drag shows, in which male-bodied actors dress and act in overtly and almost exaggeratedly feminine ways.

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The effects of microbial taphonomy on the degradation of archaeological materials in burial contexts: What is lost?

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Abstract: Microbial taphonomy is one of the largest threats to archaeology, and the preservation of important archeological materials in funerary contexts. In this paper I examine how the chemical effects of microbial taphonomy can lead to the degradation of many essential archaeological materials including bone, wood, and hair. Further, I discuss how the loss of such materials erases the ability of the archaeologist to extrapolate and interpret the information required to build an understanding of a past people's culture.

Introduction

The recovery and study of archaeological material from human burials provides crucial opportunities for understanding the history of humanity. Often, what we can learn is contingent on the preservation of materials and objects found within burial sites, which is largely influenced by microbial taphonomy. Wood analysis can allow for absolute dating, and depending on the context, can aid in the determination of social status. Hair is useful for reconstructing modes of subsistence, as well as the use of pharmacological agents in cultural ritual. Bone, arguably the most important of the materials discussed, is vital for inferring age, sex, ancestry, and pathology. Thus, bone can situate an individual's standing in society, and provide an understanding of the structural and social aspects of ancient societies. However, all of these materials are influenced to some extent by degradation, which results in the erasure of indicators for both personal and social identity. By understanding the bacterial rationale for creating environments which subject archaeological objects to damage and decay, a fuller comprehension of the types of materials microbes affect, and how they affect them, can be applied to what is lost from the archaeological record—and subsequently lost from our understanding of the past.

Chemical effects of microbial taphonomy: A brief scientific framework

Microbially-derived, hydrolytic, extracellular enzymes, as well as changes in soil pH are both major contributors to the degradation of archaeological materials. In the field of environmental microbiology, it is widely understood that prokaryotes have evolved to require certain environmental pHs to grow and proliferate. In order to make their immediate proximity the desired pH, bacteria pump hydrogen ions out of their cells and into the environment. This is similar to how plants secrete acid from their roots to sequester calcium from soil, which results in root etching on bone. Bingle (2017) notes that like humans, many bacteria are heterotrophic—unable to produce their own food—and thus feed on the remnants of other organisms. To acquire these nutrient macromolecules from the environment, heterotrophic prokaryotes transport hydrolytic enzymes such as proteases—which break down proteins—and nucleases—which break down DNA and RNA—out of the cell, and into the environment to digest them. These new nutrient building blocks can then be transported into the cell, and used

for energy in cellular processes like growth and reproduction (Bingle 2017). Upon minimization of the body's skeletal elements, bone degradation as the result of this microbial taphonomy comprises almost all occurrent break-down (Turner-Walker 2008).
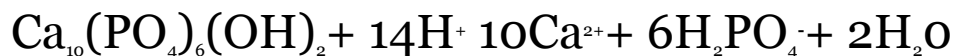
$$Ca_{10}(PO_4)_6(OH)_2 + 14H^+ \ 10Ca^{2+} + 6H_2PO_4^- + 2H_2O$$

Figure 1.(Turner-Walker, 2008). Chemical reaction of hydrogen ions and hydroxyapatite (HA), the primary mineral constituent of bone tissue. This reaction demonstrates how the interaction of chemical species results in the breakdown of HA. In archaeological, contexts this process results in bone degradation.

Wood: *Culture and temporality*

Archaeologists' attention to the wood associated with burials can lead to insights about mortuary behaviours, and provide clarification towards the social context of a given set of remains. Fragmented remnants of wood can lend support for the existence of coffins, and possible burial inclusions (Harris & Tayles 2012). In contemporary archaeology, dendrochronological techniques are primarily used for dating methods and the calibration of radiocarbon analyses (Renfrew & Bahn 2016), but can also inform archaeologists about material type—allowing for inference of class based on material rarity. Unfortunately, due to the processes of microbial taphonomy, the pocket of void space within the coffin fills via the decomposition of its wood. This causes the collapse of surrounding soil, and the possible erasure of primary burial context, with alterations to the position of skeletal elements.

While archaeothanatological methods can be used to infer the existence of a coffin or burial container at the time of deposition in the grave, their use is limited. These methods often fail to determine the species of wood, or the type of wooden burial objects once present. Aside from pinpointing the temporal location of the burial, analysis of pervasive coffin wood in some instances can allow for understanding about the social situ of the deceased. For example, in Victorian England, paupers' burial sites were typically denoted by wooden markers, as opposed to the monuments of stone commissioned by and for the upper-class (Hoffman 1919); as noted by (Ames 1981; Bell 1990) their burial grounds were observable and symbolic reiterations of the pervasiveness of social hierarchy in the Victorian era. Coffins, and associated markers, can thus act not only as a receptacle for the corpse, but as a space for the preservation of social class in life—conserving the political and social body.

Within a South African archaeological context, in some locales such as the town of Vredendal, timbers like oak and teakwood are considered to be 'high status woods'; those who are unable to afford such woods rely on the cheapest timber available, often repurposing wood that they already possess (February 1996). Therefore, social stratification is evident by the

selection of a specific variety of timber, reflecting the status of an individual in death. This allows archaeologists to estimate an individual's social standing, should the coffin wood preserve and remain identifiable. Muvch of what is known about major spans of human history are informed by the archaeological interpretations of preserved wood. For instance, dendrochronology can provide a temporal index to be used as a dating method to situate objects, structures, and people in a precise time range. Coles, Heal, & Orme (1978) believe that much of what is known about Iron-age communities in the UK, Swiss Neolithic, and Bronze Age is credited to archaeological wood. Without it's preservation, a fraction of what archaeologists currently know would cease to exist. In essence, as grave wood is lost through microbial taphonomy, so is the primary burial context—a means of absolute dating, and a valuable reflection of social status.

Material cultural objects made of wood are favorable for microbial degradation when exposed to certain environmental factors such as temperature fluctuations, high soil moisture, and soil type, which facilitates microbial proliferation. Blanchette (2000) states that "archaeological woods recovered from most environments, even those that are extreme, suffer from some form of biodeterioration," regardless of whether the environment is marine or terrestrial. Wooden objects of archaeological significance which have been submerged in water may show slower degradation rates than in terrestrial environments, due to a lack of oxygen. In other words, obligate aerobic bacteria and other microbes are unable to survive in such conditions. However, Bjordal (2012) states that fungi which target wood and cause soft-rot are commonly found in well-oxygenated, waterlogged contexts. Upon investigating archaeological wood preservation in permafrost, (Held et al. 2005; Blanchette et al. 2004) found that wood was subject to microbial taphonomy by soft-rot causing fungi, with an absence of white-rot and brown-rot in their samples. As noted by Matthiesen, Jensen, Gregory, Hollesen & Eleberling (2014), wooden objects are ubiquitous in ancient cultures. With the loss of archaeological wood, we lose important aspects of ancient material and expressive cultures.

Hair: *Diet, drugs, and death*

Due to the degradative processes of microbial taphonomy, and its associated soil chemistry, hair is rarely preserved in the archaeological record. However in the event where hair is present, it can provide valuable insight into the activities of an individual even weeks before death. Chemically-driven biodeterioration—caused by soil microbes in archaeological burial contexts—ultimately results in the deterioration of the morphology and mechanical properties of fibers, and general loss of fiber material (Peacock 2003). This enzymatic degradation breaks down the fibers into smaller constituents, which soil microbes can uptake and metabolize. Since hair growth is continual, and occurs at a predictable rate, isotopic analysis can help archaeologists to reconstruct the diet of an individual in the months prior to their passing (Brown & Alexander, 2016).

In hair, elemental isotopes are self- reflective of an individual's growth process. Therefore, analysis of isotopic ratios at different lengths of hair can reveal shifts in subsistence

close to and around the time of death (White 1993). This can provide insight as to how the dead were treated in hospice, as well as general shifts in modes of subsistence. If archaeologists yield appropriate samples for comparing isotopic data, individual burial contexts can be established. Additionally, in some instances it might be possible to observe differential burial treatments for those who died suddenly, and those who were expected to die some time before death occurred—for example, due to a terminal illness, or role in ritual. Since the keratin of hair cortices contains ^{14}C it can be used for radiocarbon dating in instances where other organic material has deteriorated, or become contaminated (Richardin, Gandolfo, Carminati, et al., 2011; Taylor et al, 1995). While typically utilised in the archaeological study of Andean mummies, hair can undergo analysis for detection of benzoylecgonine (BZE), a metabolite (metabolic product) of the psychedelic alkaloid contemporarily known as cocaine, and product of the South American coca plant (Cartmell, Aufderheide, Springfield, Weems, & Arriaza, 1991). The detection of drug metabolites in the body can reflect cultural norms of substance use, or the involvement of psychedelics in spiritual ritual—as they are commonly used in many places the world over. Overall, analysis of human hair fibers can reveal valuable information about the archaeological context; this includes the temporal context of the deceased, subsistence models and dietary constituents of the terminally ill, cyclical changes in resource exploitation and substance use (culturally specific or spiritual ritual contexts).

Bone: *Age, sex & gender, pathology and ancestry*

Skeletal material is invaluable for archaeological reconstructions of an individual's biological profile. The goal is to interpret indicators of age, sex, ancestry and pathology to paint a picture of who people once were; however, this is contingent on the preservation of bone, and to some degree collagen. Through experimentation with sections of archaeological bone, Dixon (2008) determined that bone tends to undergo extensive degradation thirty-three weeks after inoculation with anaerobic soil bacteria—bacteria which cannot grow in the presence of O_2 gas. This is concerning, as buried human remains eventually come into direct contact with soil and its inhabiting microbes—barring extraordinary circumstances of preservation. Interestingly, White & Booth (2014) used pig carcasses to mimic microbial effects in human corpse decomposition. The study concluded that complete, rather than fragmented, burials experience more microbial taphonomy, whereas skeletal material in direct contact with putrefying soft tissue experienced more bio-erosion. White & Booth (2014) argue that endogenous bacteria, part of the normal human microbiome, contributes substantially to the biodegradation of bone while still encapsulated by flesh.

In continuation, analysis of dental formula and epiphyseal union can allow archaeologists to establish the biological age of an individual at the time of death. In many cultural contexts, social status is derived from an individual's biological age. Lucy (2005) discusses the fact that archaeology has largely ignored age as a facet of social organization of societies, as well as the concept of age being culturally relative, and dynamic. The author notes that age categories are governed by variable boundaries and social involvement. Just as today, past societies held different perceptions of age, and the correlating roles of the individual in

society—taking the construction of gender, status and cultural affiliations into account (Lucy, 2005). In most contexts, biological age has some correlation with an individual's social age.

Adult sex can be determined through the analysis of skeletal morphology, and attention to features with tendencies for manifesting sex-based skeletal dimorphisms. Establishing differentiation between male and female skeletal assemblages is made possible due to sexual dimorphism. Sexual dimorphism is derived from differences in skeletal morphology, and can also refer to individual behavior and physiology (White & Folkens, 2005). Additionally, most traits which prove to be sexually dimorphic result from the development of secondary sexual characteristics at the onset of puberty (Bogin, 1999). Skeletal growth and development is considered to have reached completion upon the eruption of all permanent teeth, and epiphyseal unions. An individual's tooth eruption can be used in age determination methods for juvenile skeletons (Christensen, Passalacqua, & Bertelink 2014; White & Folkens 2005).

Here it is important to comprehend the difference between sex and gender: sex is mostly biologically determined, and rigid, while gender denotes a socio-cultural construct whose fluidity can range in degree. In addition, it is also important to note that while at large it is believed that the karyotypic XX and XY binary are the only possible combination of sex chromosomes any given individual can possess; in reality there are a number of different genotypes humans can inherit. These include Turner's syndrome (XO), Triple-X Syndrome (XXX), Klinefelter Syndrome (XXY/XXXY); XYY Syndrome, YY Syndrome, along with a number of other combinations due to aberrant variation in parental gametic haplotype, and embryonic mosaicisms. These variations in sex chromosome constituencies result in varying phenotypes in the affected individual, making them appear more or less female, male, or androgynous, and thus, potentially playing a role in the social construction of one's gender. Additionally, while it is generally perceived that all species on earth follow the conceived sexual dichotomy, species of fungi have been discovered to possess over 20,000 different sexes (Kothe 1996). In essence, sex and gender must be seen as separately constructed entities. However, due to human variation in the context of personality and self-expression, and the inability to reconstruct an individual's thought processes they must also be considered intertwined to some degree within the field of archaeology. The distinction of sexes in a socio-archaeological context is necessary in establishing who an individual was in life, and their role in society. This is significant, as many cultures display sex-based division of labour and vocation. Gendered funeral displays can be exploited for both confirmation of an archaeologist's conclusions to an individual's biological profile, and to help illustrate the gender identities of a society and how they are expressed through material culture—including grave good type. However, in the event that material culture fails to persist in the archaeological record, gender must be inferred through the determined skeletal sex. The fault in this reliance is especially apparent when investigating juvenile remains, as sexual dimorphism does not begin to manifest in the skeletal system until the onset of puberty. With that said, more accurate sex and gender restorations are reached when amassed skeletal elements, grave goods (material culture), and genetic analysis are pursued concurrently. In essence, archaeology needs to devise new and more informed methods for determining

gender identity in burial contexts where key cultural and biological indicators have been erased by the processes of microbial taphonomy.

The field of mortuary archaeology is especially interested with pathologies that manifest themselves in the skeleton, since these are the only remnants of disease and trauma which persist after the disappearance of flesh. White and Folkens (2005) conceive the goal of pathological research in an archaeological context to include disease diagnosis in skeletal remains, and examining the correlating effects on human populations and evolution. Skeletal indicators of pathology exist in bone—resulting from bone formation and resorption disequilibria . These tangents from normal growth patterns can be caused by soft tissue inflammation, which can result from infection or aberrant autoreactivity of the immune system, alterations in the adeptness of venous and arterial vasculature to carry blood to and away from target tissues, and mechanical stress (White & Folkens 2005). By analysing patterns of prevalence of osteoarthritis, White and Folkens (2005) state that it is possible to determine patterns of habitual and occupational activity of groups and populations. Social stratification incorporates profession differentiation on the basis of social status; therefore, observations of skeletal markers reflective of specific habitual patterns of motion, and intensive use of particular muscular groups (involved in vocation) can allow osteoarchaeologists to situate an individual's standing in society, and in life.

While earlier archaeologists perceived bone pathology to be indicative of poor social standing, the osteological paradox emerged with the realisation that the presence of stress and disease markers may indicate the ability of an individual to survive disease or trauma. The ability of an individual to survive such stressors can indicate the level of fitness of the afflicted individual, as well as the overall population. To counter, Nakayama, (2016) notes that linear enamel hypoplasia (LEH)—visible band-like defects in dentition due to a localised decrease in enamel thickness—is a valuable index for physiological stress and health in both osteoarchaeological and contemporary contexts. In investigating the relationship between LEH caused by childhood malnutrition and social status in Edo period (1603-1867 AD) Tokyo, Japan, they found that higher status individuals exhibited lower occurrence of LEH in every tooth type when compared to lower status individuals; this was corroborated with comparison of status-specific burial containers, and LEH presence (Nakayama, 2016).

While knowledge can be gained in terms of understanding population health from the analysis of paleopathology, numerous genetic diseases can possibly be detected using aDNA analysis. For instance, Salo et al., (1994) demonstrate that disease in past populations can be detected through genetic analysis. The identification and amplification of remnants of Mycobacterium tuberculosis DNA found in a Peruvian mummy confirmed the existence of tuberculosis in New World populations prior to European contact. Furthermore, if genetically viable collagen is still present in the bone tissue uncovered at archaeological sites, accurate reconstructions of an individual's ancestry are possible. While traditional methods of ancestry determination rely on osteometric analysis, there are often large grey areas, or inconsistencies with results; skeletal morphology alone can leave much to speculation and assumption. Fortunately, aDNA analysis can provide key understandings of ancestry which could extend to

ethnic and social affiliations in life. By analysing aDNA samples, geneticists can determine an individual's genotype, which subsequently allows for ethnicity to be determined on the basis of population specific alleles. Lastly, such methods also allow for sex determination of juvenile skeletal remains, which is otherwise impossible without the persistence of associated material culture—such as gendered objects used in life (Stone et al 1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, microbial taphonomy is one of the largest threats to archaeology, and the preservation of archeological materials. The loss of archeological wood means the loss of a method of absolute dating to define temporal context, and in some situations, the ability to socially situate an individual in society. The loss of human hair fibers equates to an inability to infer modes of subsistence, and the utilization of culturally integral psychedelics in rituals and ceremonies. Lastly, attention to the degradation of human skeletal elements is important because as archaeologists lose bone, markers indicating occupation, chronic pathology, and nutrient availability in life and development are also lost—all of which are important for establishing the biological profile, and further, social identity. The biological profile of such individual may allow an understanding of the larger socio-cultural sphere they were involved with in life and how they fit into it. Mortuary archaeology fixates on piecing together social status and its complexity from burial contexts, since burials can mediate social identity via grave goods, the body, and the burial container itself. As burial objects are lost, the only persistent representations of ancient human culture, society and identity become erased. Microbial taphonomy degrades archaeologically essential materials, and as they degrade, so does the promise for a better understanding of human history

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A thin gruel: The Natufian brew of choice

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Abstract: This paper discusses the research conducted during the excavations of Raqefet Cave, Israel—focusing on the evidence found for early beer brewing. Through starch analysis, phytoliths, and use-wear analysis, researchers have made inferences that the Natufian Culture, which occupied Raquefet Cave 15-11.5 kya, were the first to make a beer-like, lightly alcoholic gruel by fermenting cereals in bedrock mortars. It is speculated that the introduction of beer brewing correlates to the increase in the production and cultivation of cereals, making it an integral part of both ancient and modern human subsistence.

Introduction

In modern times, alcohol consumption has a significant presence in social gatherings, traditions, rituals, and special occasions (Perruchini et al., 2018; Dietler & Hayden, 2010). Similar to many other foods and beverages consumed by humans today, the consumption of alcohol is deeply embedded in the history of hominins. Fermentation of cereals was the earliest means of alcohol production, producing beverages with an intoxicating effect similar to modern alcoholic drinks. In this paper, I will discuss evidence of the earliest alcohol consumption by presenting documentation of fruit fermentation in the paleolithic era by ancestors of *Homo sapiens*. I will then explore what is thought to be the earliest archaeological evidence for beer brewing at a late Natufian burial site at Raqefet Cave, Israel. To examine the likelihood of this process occurring at the site, use-wear, phytolith, and starch granule analysis will all be considered. Finally, the relevance of these assessments will be discussed, including their role in other areas of research, and experimental work.

Early hominin fermented fruit consumption

The earliest evidence of Homo sapiens' consumption of alcohol can be traced back to the ingestion of environmentally fermented fruit, a hypothesis supported by Dudley (2000) by measuring ethanol levels in fruit ripened in the wild (Guerra-Doce, 2015; McGovern (2003). Generally, it is theorized that these overripe fruits would have been more abundant in warmer, more humid climates (Dudley, 2002; Guerra-Doce, 2015). However, in order to estimate the amount of ethanol consumed by our ancestors in these situations, reconstruction of their diets to estimate the availability of these fruits would be required, and this data is difficult to come by. Dudley (2002), Guerra-Doce (2015) and Mcgovern (2003) argue that the consumption of alcohol is essentially part of who we are as a species, and that the exposure to minimal ethanol levels in fruit consumption created an evolutionary preference to ethanol. Because the fermented fruit consumed by hominins likely only resulted in minimal inebriation, far more research is required in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of early alcohol

consumption, and its effects on ancient hominins. Further study in this area might include exploring the differences between how non-domesticated and domesticated fruits ripen, and how this affects their ethanol content (Dudley, 2000,2002). Moreover, research into how geographic variation of paleolithic climates affect the fermentation of fruit would offer insight into fruit availability in antiquity, so as to understand where and when hominins were consuming ethanol via this source. The concept of early hominins consuming fermented fruit, although certainly still explorative, manages to offer insights into pre-historical alcohol consumption by humans, and is a good starting point to study the evolution of past human diets as it pertains to our relationship with beer.

Raqefet Cave

Figure 1. Geographic location of Raqefet Cave, Israel (Barzilai et al., 2017)

The Natufian culture (15-11.5 kya) existed at a pivotal time in the Near East, as societies shifted from hunting and foraging towards sedentism and farming (Barzilai et al., 2017). The Natufian Site at Raqafet Cave is generally accepted to be dated in the late-phase of Natufian culture, falling during the time of this subsistence shift (Barzilai et al., 2017; Nadel et al., 2012; Nadel & Lengyel, 2009). The site is located in Southeastern Mount Carmel in Northern Israel, as indicated in Figure 1 (Power et al., 2013; Barzilai et al., 2017). Excavations of the cave between 2006 and 2011 revealed a burial site consisting of five chambers and twenty-nine burials (Liu et al., 2018; Power et al., 2013; Nadel et al., 2012; Nadel & Lengyel, 2009). The site has approximately one hundred bedrock features, a bedrock basin, two boulder mortars and a clay bowl shaped feature—with most features containing ancient cereal residue, such as barley and wheat (Liu et al., 2018; Power et al., 2013; Nadel et al., 2012; Nadel & Lengyel, 2009). These

features are customary of Natufian culture, which can be identified by the use of cemeteries and ground stone tools, the use of bedrock features for food storage and preparation purposes, and adorned art objects such as sculptures or carving (Barzilai et al., 2017). Their subsistence patterns included plant gathering and processing, and the hunting of animals such as gazelles and small game (Barzilai et al., 2017). Evidence of this food processing is primarily supported by the analysis of ground stone tools, which are indicative of the processing under which beer brewing occurs (Barzilai et al., 2017).

The Natufian appear in the archaeological record at the transition from foraging and hunting to agriculture and domestication, making them innovative in their subsistence processing (Hayden, 2013). Evidence from Raqefet Cave supports the theory of alcohol production by the Natufian Culture, as will be addressed in this section by analyzing use-wear, phytolith and starch granules found at the cave. This "beer", resembling a thin gruel, would have been brewed between 13,700-11,700 BP (Liu et al., 2018; Hayden et al., 2013; Power et al., 2014; Guerra-Doce, 2015). Raqefet Cave is a significant site to draw conclusions from, as the sediment was found in-situ, meaning that it can be directly related to the bedrock features it was found in (Power et al., 2013; Nadel et al., 2012; Nadel & Lengyel, 2009). An important feature to note are the mortars carved into the bedrock (see figure 2), which show evidence of prolonged use of the site, and allow us to make inferences regarding a more sedentary living pattern. Through use-wear analysis, and analysis of the residue on the mortars, researchers Liu et al. (2018) and Nadel and Lengyel (2009) were able to support the hypothesis of a cereal-based beer made at the semi-sedentary Natufian burial site.

Figure 2. Bedrock mortar features in chamber 1 at Raqefet Cave (Nadel & Lengyel, 2009).

Use-wear analysis

Use-wear experiments were conducted by analyzing the marks that stone tools made while processing various materials—including flax, hemp, wheat, and barley—on the mortars at Raqefet Cave (Liu et al. 2018). In this same study, researchers used contemporary limestone mortars with the same Mohs scale degree as found on site to conduct a comparison. Researchers were able to conclude what materials were used based on the scratch and wear types found on the mortars. Although there is regional variability and cultural differentiation in beer brewing methods, the basic process required to brew beer includes malting, mashing, and fermenting (Liu et al., 2018; Guerra-Doce, 2015). By recreating these three steps, and analyzing the use-marks left on the experimentally made mortars, the researchers were able to distinguish between use-wear resultant from beer grain processing, and use-wear from processing other foods. With this insight, three original use-wear samples from the bedrock mortars at Raqefet Cave were analyzed. The wood-on-limestone abrasions of the experimental bedrock mortars showed a high level of polish, with vertical striations when processing materials for beer brewing preparation, and replicated the in-situ bedrock use-wear (Liu et al., 2018). This led researchers to conclude that the mortars were in contact with vegetal-fiber materials used for beer brewing (Liu et al., 2018). Furthermore, the use-wear was significantly more prevalent on the bottom of the original mortars, when compared to the upper portion of the mortar (Liu et al., 2018). The research team inferred that these use-wear patterns suggest that a pestle was used to pound the botanical materials used to brew beer (Liu et al.,2018). Bedrock is also water-tight, making it an ideal container for cooking and storing beer for long periods of time (Liu et al., 2018; Hayden et al., 2013).

Phytolith analysis

Phytolith analysis is the examination of glass-like plant material that preserves over time, and can help reconstruct past plant use in the archaeological record. Microbotanical identification of the residues found at the site suggested that the boulder mortars were used to store wheat and barley malts, leading researchers to conclude that they were indeed used for fermenting these cereals (Liu et al., 2018). The phytolith samples were collected from the base of the bedrock mortars, and twelve types of dendritic phytoliths (single cell phytolith morphotypes found in grass grains) were identified, primarily those from wild wheat and barley (Liu et al., 2018; Power et al.,2013; Barzilai et al., 2017). An example of this can be seen in Figure 3. A 2013 study using thirty-five phytolith samples from burials, twelve from bedrock mortars, three tufa (a porous rock composed of calcium carbonate and formed by the precipitation of water, usually around springs) samples, and two samples from a bedrock basin at Raqefet Cave indicated that based on the significant amount of wheat and barley present, the mortars were used to either store or process these cereals (see figure 4) (Power et al., 2013). When considering phytolith samples and experimental use-wear analysis, it becomes clear that the features found at Raqefet Cave were used for the processing and storage of plants used in the brewing of beer.
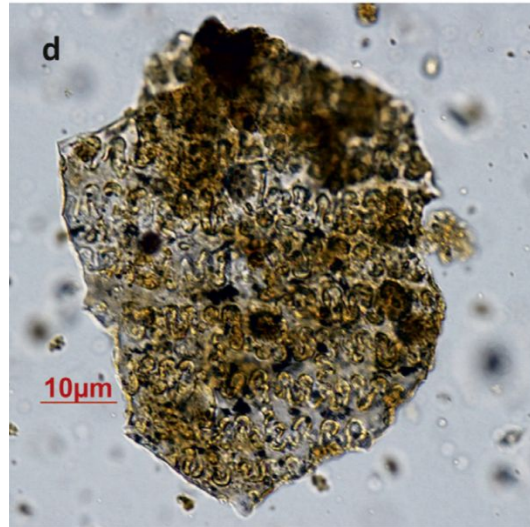
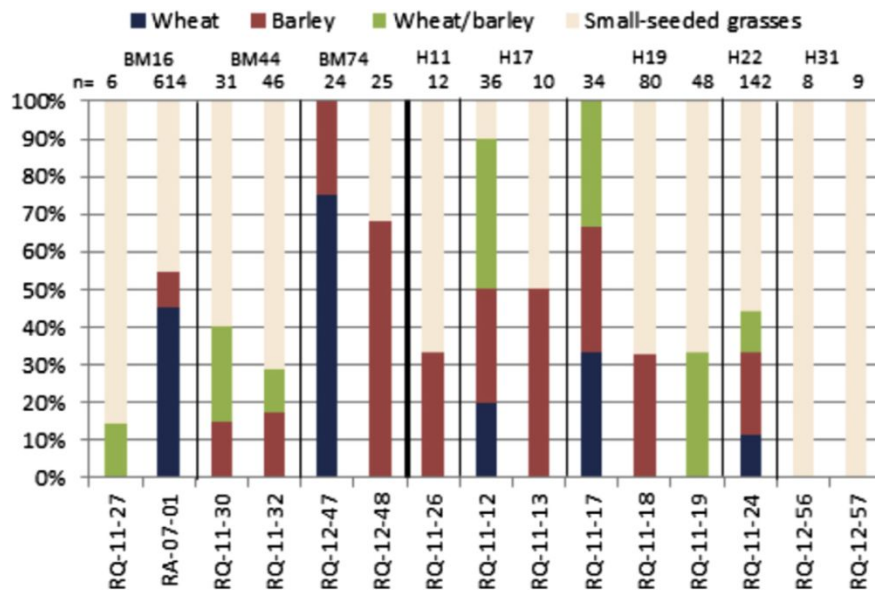**Figure 3.** Diagnostic wheat husk found at Raqefet Cave (Power et al., 2013)

Figure 4. Barley, wheat and small seeded grass multi-cell husks as relative percent, indicating the amount of each starch found in the varying areas of the site (Power et al., 2013).

Starch analysis

The purpose of starch analysis is to obtain data on the molecular changes of starch during the brewing and fermenting process, by analyzing starch changes under a microscope. By acquiring small samples of residues, researchers were able to obtain gelatinized starches from the bedrock mortars (Liu et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2017). The starches found in residues at

Raqefet Cave were determined to be from barley and wheat, and were found on all mortars uncovered at the site (Liu et al., 2018). Some were intact, but most were damaged by gelatinization—the spontaneous hydrolysis of starch, in which water molecules break the chemical bonds within starch polymers—creating a unique morphology of starches (Wang et al.,2017; Liu et al., 2018). (Wang et al., 2017). Using an experimental approach which involved brewing starches themselves, both Wang et al. and Liu et al. analyzed the molecular changes in starches after they have been through the beer brewing process. The team then compared the effects of other food processing on the same types of starches. This comparison served to differentiate the type of damage associated with the brewing process from other plant processing methods. Their findings concluded that the starches had crystalline structural changes, which correlated to the processing methods of the beer brewing process: mashing, grinding, boiling and fermentation. This damage usually took form of gelatinization, as seen in the archeological record (Liu et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2017).

Wheat and barley starches (those under analysis) begin to erode during the malting phase (soaking the grains in water to germinate, then halting germination by drying in hot air), creating small holes in the center of the granules, as seen in figure 5 (Wang et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018).When wheat and barley are boiled, as opposed to fermented, the starch granules produce a shape which resembles folding from the inside, and they become larger—indicating that the hollow centered molecules discovered at Raqefet Cave went through a similar fermentation process (Wang et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018). Other kinds of starches, such as lentil and mung bean (used for comparison), were shown to be more resistant to this process (Wang et al., 2017). These findings are supported further by the experimental approach of Liu et al. –who conducted this process with modern starch molecules, and compared the results to those found at Raqefet Cave. The modern granules appeared to have the same shape as those found at the cave once fermented, providing additional evidence for the beer brewing process having taken place on site.

While these experiments allow us to identify beer brewing in the archaeological record, they present two limitations which need to be taken into consideration when drawing conclusions. First, taphonomic processes are undeniably responsible for some of the damage sustained by the ancient starches. Second, even amongst molecules of the same starch, there may be differences in how it reacts to fermentation; where some granules may exhibit the patterning observed in the experiments, others may remain intact after the fermentation processes (Wang et al., 2017). To ensure that inferences are as accurate as possible, having a large sample size is necessary. However, even taking these limitations into consideration, analyzing damage to starch granules remains an effective way of identifying beer brewing (Wang et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018).
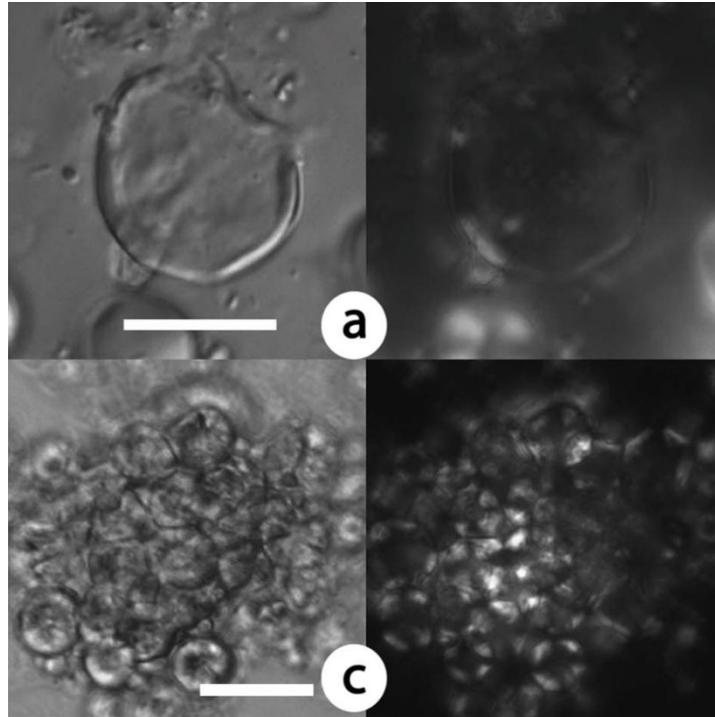
Figure 5. Starch granules used for beer brewing after fermentation showing the concave shape granules go through fermentation (Wang et al. 2017).

Purposes of the detection of early beer brewing

Acknowledging the earliest examples of beer brewing is not only a matter of interest–given the role that alcoholic beverages play in many cultures today–but is also important to regard as a pivotal shift towards the domestication of cereals, specifically, those required to brew beer (Hayden et al., 2013; Peruchini et al., 2018). It is thought that the increased requirement for cereals used in beer brewing led to the eventual domestication of these cereals, as well as a shift in feasting patterns in the Near East (Hayden et al., 2013; Guerra-Doce, 2015; Peruchini et al., 2018). Given the burial context of the beer brewing evidence at Raqefet Cave, there is potential for future research to be conducted which looks at the relationship between the production of beer, and Natufian mortuary practices or ritual feasts (Hayden et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2018; Barzilai et al., 2017; Dietrich et al., 2012; Peruchini et al., 2018; Yeshurun et al., 2013).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined a range of evidence which supports the claim that the residue found at Raqefet Cave, Israel is the earliest evidence for beer brewing in the archaeological record. I began with an example of how far into antiquity the consumption of fermented products goes. I then outlined the key traits of the Natufian culture which support the

claim that they were the first to brew beer, given their innovative subsistence processing. Following this, I addressed experimental approaches to reconstructing use-wear on the bedrock features at Raqefet Cave, and how these results resembled the patterns used in early beer brewing. I summarized the phytolith identification of the residues found on the mortars in the bedrock, which indicated that they contained residue from barley and wheat, which are cereals associated with beer brewing. Furthermore, I analyzed the research on starch molecules by Liu et al. 2018 and Wang et al. 2017, to conclude that the gelatinized starches found in the archaeological residue are the same shape as modern starches which have gone through a fermentation process. Lastly, I provided a brief explanation as to why proving the first evidence of beer brewing in the archaeological record is important from a subsistence reconstruction standpoint, and made suggestions for future studies. The research outlined in this paper offers a variety of evidence to support the claim that Raqefet Cave is the earliest example of beer brewing in the archaeological record. There is experimental, as well as in-situ evidence which underpins the notion that the mortars were used for fermentation. Through these corroborations, it becomes clear that *Homo Sapiens* ongoing relationship with beer has unmistakably ancient roots.

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