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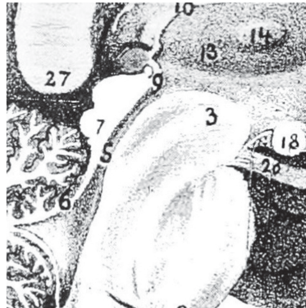

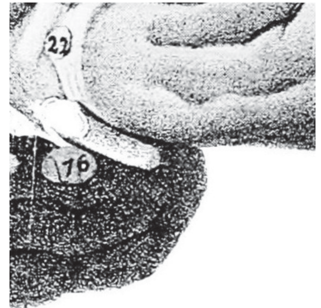

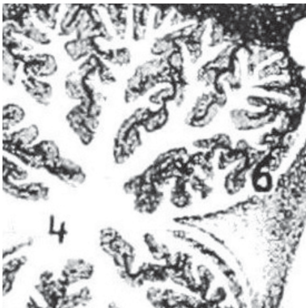

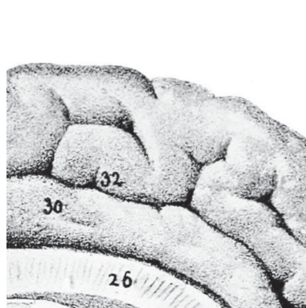

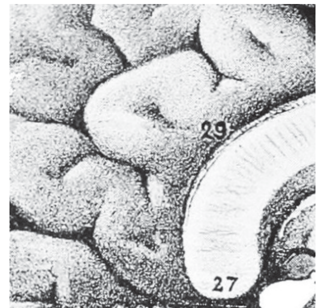

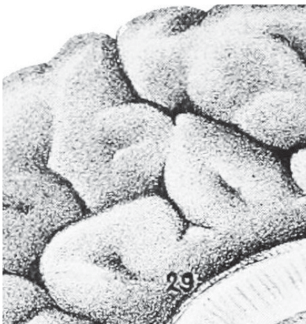

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JOURNAL HISTORY

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Ethnographic Encounters was founded in 2011 to publish outstanding work by undergraduate students of Social Anthropology.

It was inspired by the Ethnographic Encounters project that second-year students in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews do every spring where they conduct their own fieldwork project.

The works that emerged from this were so interesting and diverse that students Zoe Miller and Emily Sheppard decided to start this journal with the support and guidance from Dr. Craig Lind.

In addition to this issue, we produce a yearly special issue where submissions are opened up to other projects from anthropology students.

We remain a student-run journal and every year since our foundation we have published a volume with the best of the Ethnographic Encounters projects submitted to the journal.

Our online archives can be found at: https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/SAEE/issue/archive

With special thanks to the University of St Andrews' Department of Social Anthropology.

EDITORS NOTE

We are proud to present the newest volume of Ethnographic Encounters!

Despite a challenging year, here we are again with our latest publication. Due to COVID-19, the second year Ethnographic Encounters module final assignment was changed to a book review as students were unable to conduct fieldwork research. Adapting to this, we decided to allow for a broader array of submissions for this journal. Not only have we diversified our journal submissions, but we have also diversified our editing team including editors from all years, rather than just honours.

The opening article, written by Molly Paechter, explores neurodiversity, highlighting similarities between the ways people with autism see the world and the ways anthropologists seek to understand the societies they study. Molly's second piece explores letters from a 17th-century asylum through a micro-historic lens, analysing these letters to find the 'exceptional normal'.

Addressing social connotations in the French erotic text Les Travaux d'Hercule ou la Rocambole de la Fouterie, Raphael Killick highlights the text's ability to unveil cultural taboos and ideals of masculinity during the French Revolution. Continuing to explore historical ethnography, Xena White analyses Thomas Hood's poem 'The Bridge of Sighs' as a revelation of Victorian patriarchal attitudes to gender through female suicide and social consciousness. Meanwhile, Natalie Wong Jiayi examines feminist anthropology to better understand intersectional feminism.

We have two book reviews in this publication on Gayatri Reddy's book 'With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India'. These two lenses give different perspectives on an extremely influential gender studies ethnography. Opposing the idea of Hijras as an example of the third sex, Xena White details crucial aspects of Hijra identity and critically approaches Reddy's positionality and anthropoloical success. Romany Howarth provides a thorough exploration of Reddy's key themes including the role of asexuality, blurred religious and gender boundaries, and performativity.

Natalie Wong Jiayi contributes a book review which addresses the complexities and moral implications that come with goldmining in a community in Uyanga, Mongolia. Elizabeth Volaris examines the importance of reflexivity and positionality in terms of native and semi-native anthropology. Kristen Castro then uses her own positionality to understand the use of Facebook Messenger "reacts" among St Andrews students, exploring cultural implications and the formation of a 'quasi-language' through their use. Finally, Xiantian Ma analyzes the sociality of a 19th-century engraved drawing of St Andrews' own St Salvator's Chapel.

Lastly, we wish to congratulate our contributing authors and thank our editing team who produced this volume with us. We hope you enjoy reading our wide variety of submissions!

Rebecca Kennedy & Katy Lee

Editors-in-Chief

Neurodiverse Minds and Ethnographic Practice

By Molly Paechter

Earthling and Autisman

Once upon a time on a small, green quiet planet.

Autisman: So – welcome to my home world.

Earthling: Don't you feel weighed down? It feels as if I've got weights strapped to my arms and legs.

Autisman: Ah, but on your planet, I always feel as if I'm swimming around in space, weightlessly.

Earthling: Okay. Now I understand you. I really understand.

(Higashida, 2007:74)

Thispieceof work startedalmostaccidently – My hopes of a participant's observation style fieldwork were dashed following the worldwide Covid-19 outbreak. While under lockdown it was rather difficult to engage in dense theoretical texts. I read Naoki Higashida's text 'The ReasonI Jump' (2006) asa wayof trying kick my headinto gearand start reading again. What I found was a very anthropological text – written by a non-verbal autistic boy. As well as challenging my own perceptions and expectations of a person with non-verbal autism, this text showed me a possible new understanding of autism; autistic people as 'anthropologists', immersed in a neurotypical culture. After Naoki's book I read 'Thinking in Pictures' (1995) by autistic author Temple Grandin. She too gave me an insight into a different way of thinking worlds away from my own, and worlds away from Naoki's too. The following is an ethnographic analysis with these texts as my 'data.'

Approaching these texts, I thought that would be given insight into a completely different way of thinking, and I was. But what I didn't expectto find wasaportrait of my own social life starting back at me. This realisation reinforced my understanding of the value given by an outside perspective. Thisideahasbeen inherent to anthropology sinceitsinception. For thispieceof writing, my ideaof theanthropological imagination is rooted in Paloma Gayy Blascoand Huon Wardle's book How to Read Ethnography (2007), where *comparison* and *models* are described as key building blocks for anthropological understanding.

There is a small, and growing body of literature on autism and anthropology. However, something not written about in anthropological research on autism so far, is the understanding and depiction *of neurotypical sociality* which can be found in neurodiverse voices. Naoki describes what he perceives as our differences with regardsto communication.

> 'Making sounds isn't the same thing as communication, right?... Isn't there a belief out there that if a person is using verbal language, it follows that the person is saying what they want to say?'
> (Higashida, 2006: 37)

He museson this in further works too

> 'Exchanges of thought are to a large degree, reliant on this thing called language. Thanks to it, human beings – and we alone – can truly enter and explore the feelings of others. What an extraordinary skill…Obtaining items just by using words is a pretty amazing thing to my mind.'
> (Higashida, 2017: 86 & 92).

In both examples we seeparts of our own 'neurotypical' sociality laid out bare in front of us, that are so embedded that they are not always plain to see – unless you are an anthropologist, unless you think differently.

Likewise, in the first few pages of her account, Temple Grandin can be seen to give a depiction of how neurotypicals might think;

> ''Some people think in vividly detailed pictures, but most think in a combination of words and pictures. For example, many people see a generalised generic church rather than specific churches and steeples when they hear or read the word steeple. Their thought patterns move from a general concept to specific examples'
> (Grandin, 1995:11).

She is offering us an example to try and show how the way she thinks about the world may differ from the reader's way of thinking.

Moving on from this initial starting point we can start to identify specific parallels between how anthropologists perform their task and how the autistic authors perform theirs. Throughout her account Temple Grandin refers to herself as a 'scientist trying to figure out the natives' (Grandin, 1995: 153). In fact, Oliver Sacks named his book 'Anthropologist on Mars' after her way of describing how she felt in the neurotypical world. Reading her text from an anthropological background allowed me to see that this assertion was not just a catchy title, but true in a very tangible sense.

Here I explore the specific practice of model making to aid interpretation and understanding of human behaviour. Temple describes how she created and utilised analogies in order to 'stay out of trouble' in her teenageyears. Shedeveloped a systemof rules which shecalled 'The Sins of the System.' Temple described how she would observe her peers and teachers to find rules which she could designate as sins of the system- in order to be classified in this analogy a rule would have to be so important that if broken it would result in expulsion. (Grandin, 1995: 108). The 'sins of the system' model covers rules that have 'very stiff penalties for seemingly illogical reasons' (Grandin, 1995: 105) So, this example neatly shows us what Temple can show us about what seemsto her the weird – 'illogical' nature of our social world whilst simultaneouslyoutlining the methods she usesto understand the social world. In many sensesthis can be seen as ultimate reflexivity within anthropology.

Temple described another tool which helped her decipher behaviour. The tool was utilised is the hope that it might lead to a deeperunderstanding of social norms and better models she created, such as the 'Sins of the System' model. Shecategorised behaviour she did not understand as an 'Interesting Social Phenomenon' or an ISP (Grandin, 1995: 153). 'When other students swooned over the beetles, I called their reaction asISP' (Grandin, 1995:153). So, here we can seethe uncertainty present in Temple's understanding – she is always looking to evidenceto improve her models and has quite complex ways of organising the 'data', as she calls it, which may help to this end.

Taking both examples above, we can situate Temple's methods closely with

anthropologist Christine Hugh-Jones who spoke of the process of ethnographic writing 'To make presentation as clear as possible, the model is described first and the extent as to which it is an accurate reflection of social groupings is discussed afterwards' (Hugh-Jones, 1979: 13 & 14, in Gay Y Blasco & Wardle). Temple too, is drawing up a basic model first–'The Sins of the System', and is later tweaking and reworking the model based on subsequent observation of ISP's.

In their book 'How to Read Ethnography' Paloma Gay y Blasco and Huon Wardle describe how widespread the use of diagrams is in ethnographic writing (Gay Y Blasco & Wardle, 2007: 99). They also explain how ethnographic argument can range from a 'flexible style' to a 'much more structured one' (Gay Y Blasco & Wardle, 2007: 102). I perceive clear parallels between the texts written by Naoki and Temple the two approaches to constructing theoretical models of society and culture that Gay Y Blasco and Wardle identify, Temple representing the more structured approach and Naoki representing the more flexible approach.

In Naoki's second book, written at the age of twenty, his methods for understanding the neurotypical world seem to be much more fleshed out than the first. He describes the differences between how he differs from his family when it comes to time management.

> 'Listening to my mother and my sister discussing how they handle time; I've come to understand that there are things they do that I don't. These are, first, deciding by what time a certain job needs to be completed; Next, working back to the present time to see what the available time frame is; And then, working on the job to ensure it's done by the target time. These calculations, I imagine, are key to turning plans into reality.'
> (Higashida, 2017: 59)

In this example, we can see comparisons between Naoki's means of understanding behaviour around him and anthropologist Gregory Bateson's notes on how to convey the chaos of real life into ethnographic writing;

> 'I shall first present the ceremonial behaviour, torn from its context so it appears bizarre and non-sensical; and I shall then describe the various aspects of its cultural setting and indicate how the ceremonial can be related to the various aspects of culture'
> (Bateson, 1958 [1936]: 3, in Gay Y Blasco & Wardle).

In Naoki's case we can understand the same kind of process happening – he recognises their behaviour and at first it seems bizarre, unfathomable, but by slowly piecing together the context, he can understand the behaviour. He goes one step further by presenting it in this way to us – he is trying to describe himself, but instead describes those around him.

Anthropologist Joyce Davidson also identifies the anthropological and ethnographic approach many autistic people take. She starts with gender; Davidson argues that we can approach the social construction of gender through exploring autistic minds. She quotes a blog written by an autistic woman '(Gender) is probably the single most intensively socialised thing humans do, and the one whose 'rules' are least explicit. Since autistic people are notoriously resistant to socialisation, it just makes sense that we wouldn't pick up as much of the gender programming as neurotypicals do' (Lindsay, 2008: August 12, in Davidson, 2016: 62). Davidson argues that, because notions of gender are not inherent to

autistic people, they approach it like anthropologists. She argues that this understanding is advantageous for autistic people, as fitting in with their assigned gender allows for them to be more accepted in the neurotypical world (Davidson, 2016: 62). Through this assertion Davidson discusses a unique opportunity for anthropology to study minds which are removed in usual ways from social contracts, understanding and obligation. In this case autistic understanding of gender, Davidson argues, generates 'discontinuity and dissonance' in academic understandings of gender, so profound that they are capable of 'significantly advancing the feminist project' (Davidson, 2016:62).

Another anthropologist, and autistic woman Dawn Eddings Prince described herself as a 'natural anthropologist' from birth because of the way her brain worked. She refers to neurotypical people as 'primates' as she felt this was the only word that could evoke her feeling of estrangement from most neurotypical people. She also describes how her anthropological process is inherent to her social life with neurotypicals. She was constantly 'trying to make sense of the primates around me, so different to me in many ways' (Prince, 2010: 57.) Furthermore, she believes her anthropological insight as greatly enhanced by her being autistic 'what has been labelled symptoms of autism in the context of my culture are inherited gifts of insight and action' (Prince, 2010: 57). Eddings Prince account gives us a nice example of how there can be a dialectical relationship between anthropology and autistic minds – the former providing a disciplined framework and collective methods for understanding other people, and the latter providing raw, natural ways of being anthropological.

The Davidson and Eddings Prince examples leads us to a significant difference between autistic authors and anthropologists. While there may be similarities in how the authors and anthropologists conceive of their task, the end point is different – Temple and Naoki may be constructing models in a similar way to anthropologist but the difference is that the models they create are absolutely paramount to them engaging in social relations. This is not often true for anthropology academics who usually have social engagement out-with their anthropological task.

Moving on we must explore other ways that Naoki and Temple differ from anthropologists. Alongside the insightful examples given, there is also evidence of misunderstanding of neurotypical thinking in both authors accounts. For both authors there seems to be an assumption that for everyone else the world is predictable, like a line or a grid – when I would argue that in actually it isn't like that for anybody. Take for example Naoki's musings on memory:

> 'I imagine a normal person's memory is arranged continuously, like a line. My Memory, however, is more like a pool of dots. I'm always 'picking up' these dots – by asking questions – so I can arrive back at the memory that these dots represent'
> (Higashida, 2006: 24.)

But do 'normal' people think in a line? I'm not sure…This gives us a starting point for looking at the depiction of neurotypicals in the author's minds.

We can start to explore the mechanisms by which each author understands themselves. Temple seems to make sense of herself through two sets of symbols: animals and science. The two seem very entangled for her, she speaks of her job:

> 'I have to imagine what experiencing the world through a cow's sensory system is like. Cattle have a very wide panoramic visual field, because they are prey species… Similarly, some people with autism are like fearful animals in a world full of dangerous predators… Their fear of change may be an activation of ancient anti predator systems that are blocked or masked in most other people.'
> (Grandin, 1995: 168.)

Here we can notice how Temple's notion of self is defined by her experience with animals and is rationalised by her knowledge of bodily systems, evolution, and genetics.

In a similar vein, Naoki also associates autistic minds with the distant past, but this time not with our natural ancestors but outside of humanity all together:

> 'We just want to go back. To the distant, distant past. To a primeval era before human beings existed…We are a different kind of human, born with primeval senses. We are outside the normal flow of time, we can't express ourselves, and our bodies are hurtling us through life.
> (Higashida, 2006: 104-5)

He seems to understand himself through metaphors in the form of prose and makes clear distinctions between 'outside and 'inside.' He goes on to meditate on his 'purpose'

> 'I think that people with autism are born outside the regime of civilisation…We are like travellers from a distant, distant past. And if, by our being here we could help the people of the world remember what truly matters for the earth, that would give us quiet pleasure.'
> (Higashida, 2006: 151)

Personal narratives and means of understanding the self have been explored by anthropologist Karen Gainer Sirota who understands narratives such as Naoki and Temple's as a 'technology of the self', conceptualised by Michel Foucault (Sirota, 2010: 95). Foucault said that the definition of a technology of self is a mechanism which

> 'Permits individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality'
> (Foucault, 1988: 18).

Sirota extends this, arguing that specifically, narratives offer a 'template for living' as well as guides for action, relationships, thinking and feeling (Sirota, 2010: 95). This is certainly true for both Naoki and Temple with both explicitly stating the importance of these narratives for their engagement in the world.
Examining the difference between the autistic anthropological process and the academic anthropological process alongside Sirota's extension of Foucault's conceptual framework gives us space to understand Naoki and Temple's process in a more complete way. The deploying of anthropological techniques only takes them so far, they must also integrate what they have learned to create a narrative which preforms as a 'technology of self' and gives them a 'template for living'. We must now ask the question; Why are autistic people so adept at understanding certain aspects of neurotypical sociality, when neurotypical's are so poor at understanding autistic sociality? Perhaps it because of the number's imbalance – autistic people are forced to live permanently in a neurotypical social world - we can dip in and out of their social world as we choose. The whole concept of deep participant observation, and extended field research in anthropology supports the fact that one must be *completely immersed* to fully understand a culture – and that's what autistic people are, immersed in world full of unfamiliar 'primates','natives' - neurotypicals.

This ethnographic analysis opens up new possibilities for the future of anthropology, one that embraces neurodiversity, reaping the benefits of viewing sociality out-with neurotypical culture and enriching our understanding of people who think differently.

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Microhistory as Ethnographic Exploration: Letters from an 17thc. Asylum

By Molly Paechter

Introduction

'It is common to compare the appointments of [mental asylums] in the present day very favourably with those of the past. Perhaps too much is said of this.'

(Elizabeth Naish Capper, patient at the Retreat, 1878)

Microhistory – close reading of a document with a view to imagine the circumstances and world views of a different time – naturally goes hand in hand with the anthropological method of ethnography. Carlo Ginzburg, a key advocate for microhistory, likens the praxis to the dilation of a camera lens; 'by narrowing the scope of our inquiry, we hope to understand more' (Ginzburg, 2005: 665). Ginzburg's approach is heavily influenced by Eduardo Grendi's notion of 'The Exceptional Normal' – the idea that one might approach an archive looking for 'outliers', people who went against the grain of their time, giving us insight into an individual's worldview – if time was a culture, we could see 'the natives' point of view' (Ginzburg, 1993:33).

My search for 'The Exceptional Normal' brought me to the archives of an influential mental asylum founded in the late 16th century by Quakers in York – *The Retreat*. *The Retreat* was founded in 1792 by friends of Hannah Mills, a 42-year-old quaker woman who had been placed in York Asylum following the death of her husband. Friends tried on countless occasions to visit her but were constantly refused entry. Just two months after being admitted, Hannah died unexpectedly. Her friends believed that she was treated inhumanely in the asylum – shackled and beaten- and that this had eventually led to her death. Her friends set up *The Retreat* as a direct response– vowing to offer humane care within an environment that valued their wellbeing and their lives(TheRetreat, 2020).

Nearly ninety years after *The Retreat* opened, in 1878 - Elizabeth Naish Capper wrote a letter to a friend, M.R, detailing her four month stay as an in-patient, two years prior. Elizabeth wrote the letter after a conversation with M.R in London. Their conversation was cut short, so it was continued by Elizabeth in the form of this lengthy 36-page letter. In this letter Elizabeth is extremely critical of her, and others', treatment at *The Retreat* and hopes that this letter will 'Enlighten Friends' who she believes to be under 'delusion' of the environment there (Capper, 1878: 1). Elizabeth, surprised that she had manged to write so much on the topic, kept a copy of the letter, and it is this copy that I have here today (Capper, 1878: 35).

The letter was sent into *The Retreat's* archive in 1965 by Elizabeth's great-niece Mary. Mary describes Elizabeth as being 'much loved and respected in our large family and I believe in the Society of Friends' (Capper, 1965: 2). Reading Elizabeth's letter is enjoyable and – although she is reporting on abhorrent treatment of people- she is animated and fiercely present within the text, frequently using punctuation to emphasise points and to be sarcastic. The ethnographic analysis of this document takes two directions. Firstly, I will investigate the things that Elizbeth deems most important – the reasons for writing the letter which questions The Retreat's place in psychiatric history. Secondly, I will investigate the things that Elizabeth does not make explicit – the examples of social relations that she uses to back up the primary points and ponder over what this tells us about her individual world view.

Background and Part One: Remembering and Silencing

Elizabeth frequently refers to the environment as a key factor of the 'wretchedness' of The Retreat. She paints a picture of a crowded, smelly building; even being within its walls was 'exhausting'. Few patients were allowed outdoors, and anyone with the privilege to was met with :

'air charged with the flying soot inseparable from the neighbourhood of a large city, often scented strongly with gas made on the premises'

(Capper, 1878: 2)

At first, patients seem to be just another part of the gloomy architecture of the place, blending in like 'slow moving corpses.' Elizabeth later suggests that their demeanour was in part due to the nature of the environment and the treatment they received there (Capper, 1878:6).

Elizabeth goes on to address the 'medicine' that patients are required to take. She describes a 'nightly draught' which she was forced to ingest;

'The anguish caused by it to both stomach and head was indescribable… the sleep produced by it wretched and unnatural. The effect gradually destroyed my energies.' (Capper, 1878: 3)

Later, she describes the tangible effects of the medicine on patients' bodies;

'Several bore marks of injury from the strong nightly draught, which caused brown spots.'

The spots became permanent eventually, the thickness of the marks on one's skin was a sign on how long you had been living at *The Retreat* (Capper, 1878: 4). Finally, Elizabeth tells us of 'doubtless restraint' routinely used in a 'rough' and 'cruel' manner (Capper: 1878, 7). One example described in detail is of a 'Mrs. R'; a clever young woman who seemed bored and restless most of the time, often muttering under her breath that she longed for a task to give her purpose. Mrs. R once took a walk out into the garden without permission and was fiercely punished – she was removed to a part of the building known as 'No. 5' – Elizabeth had heard rumours about what happened down there, but her fears were not confirmed until Mrs. R returned to the regular quarters just a few weeks later.

'I was greatly shocked at the change in her appearance. What could have been done to her in those few weeks I have no idea. I should not have recognised her by face or by manner, both were so changed. Years do not often make such a painful alteration.' She entered 'No. 5' a 'fine young woman, in the bloom of her beauty, spritely' now 'her carriage listless and weary, she looked old and feeble.'

She had marks on her face from being hit, but the marks left on her spirit lasted longer (Capper, 1878: 7-8).

These conditions, however harrowing, seem to fit in with common perceptions and ideas about mental asylums at the time. However, they gain more significance if we examine *The Retreat's* place in psychiatric history and its role in re-shaping attitudes towards mental health care. *The Retreat* dabbled in different forms of treatment in the first few years on opening, including 'heroic treatment' which dominated psychiatry at the time. Heroic treatment was born of a blend of classical science and medieval cosmology. The practice focused on the idea that metal disorder arose from an unbalance of blood, phlegm, and yellow and black bile in the body. Treatments consisted of practices such as bloodletting and purging (Cherry, 2013:398) Hand in hand with the physical treatments, there was a general idea that the focus of psychiatry was not to awaken logic within a person, but to subdue their unsavoury behaviour at any cost (Cherry, 2013: 396).

It was decided through 'experiment and common sense' that 'moral treatment' was the most effective way forwards for *The Retreat* (Cherry, 2013: 398.) Moral treatment started in the basics– good food, clean living conditions and lots of time outside. A key focus is finding meaningful work for ill people whether it be intellectual, manual, or religious. Crucially, a good relationship between nurses, doctors and patients must be maintained, and the use of restraint or force used only for the safety of the patients or others (Cherry, 2013: 398-9). A specific treatment that could be prescribed was the creation of a 'family atmosphere' (Cherry, 2013: 399). It cannot be underestimated the uniqueness of this approach in psychiatry at the time. *The Retreat* boasted huge recovery rates and soon became the example for how a mental asylum should operate (Cherry, 2013:400). *The Retreat's* influence protruded globally and temporally - many of the community-based treatments we have nowadays can be theoretically traced back to ideas formed there.

Moral treatment has received significant criticism of late – it was dubbed 'moral imprisonment' by Foucault (Cherry, 2013: 402). What concerns us is not an evaluation of treatment, but an investigation into Elizabeth's account and how it differs from psychiatry's collective memory of *The Retreat*. Bringing light to this account compels us to ask questions about the real history of an institution which acutely informed the psychiatric practice of today. Elizabeth's account offers a unique perspective on voices which have been routinely silenced in the field of psychiatry and– the gap between her experience and how *The Retreat* is remembered shines a damning light on this silencing.

Part Two: Elizabeth's Worldview

This next part of the investigation focuses more on Elizabeth's specific world view. Not only are there things that can be gained anthropologically from this acute investigation, but it also helps us understand the assertations made through an analysis of her criticisms of *The Retreat*. Throughout her criticism, we see Elizabeth's encounters with others play out – characters are important for her. Through her descriptions of the people around her, we begin to understand that for Elizabeth, there is a clear distinction between patients and staff – and this manifests in the sympathies felt towards them.

'Othering' offers an interesting gateway into Elizabeth's understanding of her world. Johannes Fabian reflects on anthropology, 'Awkward and faddish as it may sound, othering expresses the insight that the other is never simply given, never just found or encountered, but *made*.' (Fabian: 1990, 755). This statement was born out of anthropology's crisis about representation, but I think the insight works well here too, we can understand that Elizabeth's notion of the 'other' is *made*, and thus is much more revelatory than it may seem at first.

Elizabeth is extremely sympathetic to the patients at The Retreat. She states that 'Every oppressed and helpless fellow-being claims our sympathy and interest' (Capper, 2013: 17) It is clear that she believes most patients' condition is inherently tied to the environment in which they are kept and the treatment which they are subject to. This could be attributed to her own experience – she came to live at The Retreat as she only came for help with insomnia, she left psychically disabled from the medication she had to take and emotionally troubled due to the things she witnessed (Capper, 1878: 22). Throughout her account is an underlying belief that the people there have just lost their way, and that proper fresh air and companionship will 'return' people to their real and whole selves. Again, this is closely tied to her own experience – her only way to recover was to be removed from The Retreat and spend time somewhere with an abundance of fresh air and kindness (Capper, 1878: 13).

Her sympathy extends to others in *The Retreat* – outwith her personal experience. She speaks of two elderly women whom she sees treated badly by the staff. Upon expressing sympathy for the women to the staff members responsible, Elizabeth is quickly quietened– these women said wicked things – they were unworthy of sympathy! Elizabeth writes

> 'It may be that they had never been more to blame than those who mocked them'
>
> (Capper, 1878: 17.)

She addresses their age as well, stating

> 'They had once had power to demand respect from others; and treated as they now were, or are, without any hope for redress – never asked what they like, or how they feel, laughed at when they complain…what wonder that with clouded or distorted minds, with a bitter sense of wrong and a confused memory of happier days…what wonder that the sound was so often heard of mutter curses'
>
> (Capper 1878: 17)

She goes on to make a poignant observation,

> 'If people are sufficiently demented to need such restraints, they ought not to be treated as animals, or punished as if they were responsible for their conduct'
>
> (Capper, 1878: 17).

Elizabeth's sympathy is not afforded to those with a position of power within the institute. After outlining her three main

qualms with *The Retreat* as discussed in Part One, she saves her *most* profound disgust for the girls employed to do house work at the centre

> '(there is) no-one to speak to but servant girls of a very inferior class…whose habitual talk among themselves was a very low kind of love nonsense and some of whose private reading, kept where I could see it, was of a description sold only in disreputable shops…the girls amuse themselves with the sad things they have to witness, paying little or no respect to age and infirmity'
> (Capper, 1878: 4.)

The only instance of direct confrontation is with Dr Baker, where Elizabeth's directly address her personal feeling about her treatment at *The Retreat*

> 'I told him that I believed what he meant by 'better' was a nearer approach to that subdued and helpless condition below the power of complaint…He said nothing, but looked as if what I said was truth'
> (Capper, 1878: 12).

It cannot really be ascertained what Dr Baker actually thought when he was confronted by Elizabeth, but her description of his response gives us a good impression of her view of 'us' versus 'them' when it came to staff at the institute.

Upon first reading, we might attribute Elizabeth's sympathy for patients to her own personal experience and goodwill. Reading further about Quakers, we can see that the Quaker idea of the 'light within' might offer a more substantial interpretation. Quakers believe that there is a God within each person, 'An indwelling power whose expression should not be hindered by any form of physical or mental oppression… even the most severely afflicted of the mentally ill retain some spark of that light' (Cherry, 2013: 297).

However, this is called into question when we review Elizabeth's conflict with staff in the institute. Why is sympathy afforded to those who do not possess 'mental power', but not to those born of a lower class? Surely if the light within principle holds, she would bare sympathy for the women employed to work at *The Retreat*. Further exploration into what she said about the patients could resolve this. We might come back to her sympathy expressed towards the two elderly women, her anger at their behaviour intensifies when she exclaims 'They had once had the power to demand respect from others.' We can begin to understand her perception on the world as perhaps in terms of status rather than that of religious integrity. But again, this directly opposes how we remember Quakers of the 1800's – as people who strive for an egalitarian society, without status or power. Elizabeth demonstrates her commitment to egalitarian society throughout her letter - apart from the two instances detailed above. An example of this is her recommendation that a man and a woman should share the responsibility of running the institute 'better both' (Capper, 1878:4)

So, what does this analysis mean for our investigation? Either Elizabeth is the 'Exceptional Normal', a Quaker woman who did not wholly adhere to the beliefs that history presumes she would have, or our idea of Quakerism at the time is not correct. If we begin to fully accept that our idea of Quakerism is not whole, this gives a power to interpret the reasons why The Retreat was so mis-remembered. Here we have shown how analysis of an individual's worldview can deepen the understanding of the content found in a document written by them.

Conclusion

So, have we found 'The Exceptional Normal'? I hate to say it, but I am not sure. Elizabeth's account certainly goes against the grain of psychiatry's collective remembering of *The Retreat*, revealing abuses and attitudes within the institution which have been silenced to history – if nothing else, this has made the investigation worth it's while ten times over. However, I am not confident to ascertain whether or not Elizabeth and M.R's correspondence reflects a particularly exceptional worldview at the time; the evidence of abuse in The Retreat points to the fact that perhaps our understanding of Quaker practice might be quite wrong. So, with this understanding missing, it is hard to brand their outlook as 'exceptional' or 'unexceptional'. I think I can say that it is exceptional in comparison to our understandings of Quakerism at the time.

What I am sure about, is that this piece of writing shows an honest anthropological venture into the practice of Microhistory – complete with every uncertainty. Part One shows how we can examine documents to shine a light on events that might go against our collective ideas of a place and its past. Recognising silences gives us a starting point for analysing how our past influences our present. Part Two exemplifies the value added by a specifically ethnographic approach to microhistory.

With *The Retreat's* legacy so present in psychiatry today, I would like to finally bring your attention to Elizabeth's warning quoted at the beginning of this essay;

> 'It is common to compare the appointments of [mental asylums] in the present day very favourably with those of the past. Perhaps too much is said of this.'

She reminds us that we should not rejoice in bad treatment, just because it is better than the treatment of the past. We must always be vigilant when it comes to social responsibility – personally, I believe that in the interests of preserving 'The Exceptional Normal' now, and throughout the rest of time – me must listen to, celebrate and preserve the voices which seem the most outlandish, the weirdest and the most *exceptional*.

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Review of *Les Travaux d’Hercule ou la Rocambole de la Fouterie* by anonymous published in 1790.

By Raphaelle Killick

Labelled as pornographic in the late 18th century, obscene erotic texts and representations unveiled societal cultural taboos, forbidden desires and intimate thoughts of the people of their time. The narrative built around these sexual fantasies can, therefore, be understood as a carrier of collective representations, conscious or unconscious. The plethora of erotic texts produced during the French Revolution can, thus, be interpreted as symbolic of the political turmoil and social upheaval happening at the time. Among these texts, *Les Travaux d’Hercule ou la Rocambole de la Fouterie*, published in 1790, acts as a guide or a manual depicting twelve sexual positions alongside other texts with erotic undertones narrated by an anonymous writer. However, hidden beneath the crude and vivid imagery are the changing virtues and customs driven by the French Revolution. Linking sexuality and politics, *Les Travaux d’Hercule* shows the extent of the embodied experience of the Revolution. We find in this source both the politically charged representations of masculinity and the body as well as a reflection on the wider dynamics experienced by men in relation to society and women.

In exploring this text, firstly I shall introduce the source’s context, situating it historically and within anthropological literature. In doing this, Bourdieu’s concept of Habitus and writings on masculine domination will show how the source effectively reflects the social landscape of the time. Secondly, I will demonstrate through the lens of *Les Travaux d’Hercule* the transformation of ideals of masculinity during the French Revolution, from the libertine to the heroic Hercules. Lastly, I shall widen my analytical scope and examine how *Les Travaux d’Hercule* paradoxically hides a subliminal propagandist message inciting violence and extremism whilst also revealing a threatened and fragile sense of masculinity.

Les Travaux d’Hercule ou la Rocambole de la Fouterie is a collection of pornographic texts revolving around the depictions of twelve sex positions. Numerated and given a title, the descriptions are only one page long. Surprisingly, *Les Travaux D’Hercule* was not censored: during the Ancient Regime, erotic texts and pornography were banned and were referred to as ‘philosophical texts’. These books and pamphlets were therefore hidden but were still largely in circulation and even considered best-sellers (Darnton, 1995: 21). However, after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789, censorship of all literary genres was lifted and pornography was freed from any state or religious censorship. Thus, *Les Travaux d’Hercule*, published in 1790, narrowly escapes these rules which were later restored during Napoleon’s reign (Hunt, 1996: 315). Despite its legality, the author

still chose to remain anonymous, claiming to be an emulator of Piron, Grécourt and Gervais, a dramatist, poet and composer respectively. The author often references the works of these men throughout the book, in particular 'L'Ode à Priape', an erotic poem by Alexis Piron written almost a century before in 1710. These references can be considered an inspiration or a homage to these previous artists who were the precursors of pornographic literature. The source was intended for mass consumption, targeting a male audience: indeed, serving as a guide for men by men. The language used addresses the male participant, explaining how he should act or position himself. For example, 'on fait asseoir une femme. On lui passe les jambes sur les deux épaules'(59). The pronoun 'on' suggests that the reader is part of the action and is himself handling the woman, who is always considered, the 'other'.

Les Travaux d'Hercule is part of a wider corpus of pornographic literature published during the Revolution. *Les Quarante manières de foutre*, for example, is also a manual and compilation of sexual positions representing Hercules as the masculine ideal. Furthermore, Le Bordel Patriotique, an erotic play satirising Marie-Antoinette and key revolutionaries, has a different aim and structure but is still of a similar genre. Therefore, the source can be understood as one of many and a prime example of the erotic literature produced during the French Revolution, where the language of pleasure and insurrection merge.

The French Revolution constitutes a particularly interesting moment in history, since these years were a time of unprecedented political and symbolic upheaval. The struggle for domination articulated a split on two levels: on the one hand, the clash between Republicans and monarchists occurred simultaneously with the conflict between the Jacobins and the Girondins; and on the other, the exclusion of women from political life. These power dynamics are most easily represented by the body, which became a political weapon during the revolution. The elites and the aristocracy were seen as a disease, a symbol of a tired and sick France that had to be eliminated (Genand, 2005: 584). This desire was later embodied by the decapitation of Louis Capet, the French Monarch whose body was no longer seen as sacred but merely human. Thus, the representations of the body, and more importantly the masculine body, during the French Revolution were inherently political. This can be linked to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the body internalising and reproducing social values leading to the crafting of our social identity. The cultural reality is moulded and rooted within the behaviours of the person who unconsciously carries them out (Bourdieu, 1977). The concept of habitus reinforces the importance of the body and how its representations can help us capture a particular cultural context, in this case through the sexual bodies described in the source. Bourdieu's work is relevant again when examining masculinity and its theory. In *Masculine domination*, the anthropologist seeks to identify the structural and social roots of man's omnipresent domination over women. He interprets masculinity as a relation of power between men and women and among men themselves (Bourdieu, 1998:78). Within the context of the French Revolution and explored in the source, two ideals of masculinity are pitted against each other, one of the libertine of the Ancient Regime and the other of the Hercules of the new Republic. In *Les Travaux d'Hercule,* sexuality and politics are inherently tied and encapsulate the revolutionary ideology for renewal and the creation of a 'New Man'. A parallel is established between the formation of bodies and of political consciousness: mastering the lessons of pleasure allows the emergence of extraordinary men, outstanding lovers but also, and above all, model citizens in the service of the nation.

A great number of pornographic texts during the Revolution, including *Les Travaux d'Hercule*, deploy a specific imaginary of the male. Through the sexualised staging of virility, a sense of their physical characteristics and attestations of sexual potency contribute to the construction of an ideal of masculinity. The latter is socially constructed and defined by the people who carry it out. When thinking about virility, rather than being inherent or something one must maintain, it is an ideal one must attempt to achieve. This study of the male body and its representations explores the social perception of manhood at the time of the Revolution, one that is politically charged. Indeed, during the Ancient Regime, and most generally France in the 17th and 18th centuries, the representations of the ideal man revolved around the figure of the libertine, indulging in hedonistic pleasures, with little or no moral virtue, and associated with the nobility and aristocracy (Forthe and Taithe, 2007: 23). Embodied by Valmont, the hero of Pierre Choderlos de Laclos's novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* published in 1782, he is the champion of narcissism and dishonesty. However, at the turn of the Revolution, the libertine became considered ridiculous, effeminate and useless as illustrated in the source. At the beginning of the book, the author clearly welcomes the reader on their journey to pleasure. However, he later warns that this book is not addressed to the 'petits-maitres, ces pygmées en galanterie' (p.10). Here, the author mocks and ridicules the 'petit-maître' and later refers to them as 'des débiles et des efféminés' and compares them to feeble women. We can see here a clear shift in the perception of masculinity through the rejection of the figure of the libertine, and the replacement of the strong and vigorous Hercules. The Revolution condemns all allusion to refinement, delicacy and dishonesty - values defining the former. It is no coincidence that the National Constituent Assembly passed a decree abolishing the nobility in June 1790. Hence, at the time of the publication of the source, the aristocracy and what they represented were considered something of the past and no longer relevant. The narrator, therefore, excludes weak or diminished bodies from his text: these fatigued entities, whether characters or readers, will no longer have a place in this sexual breviary or in revolutionary France. This exclusion is emblematic of the wider ideological dynamic, the desire to eradicate the Ancient Regime and the nobility by the revolutionaries.

As the title of the book suggests, the Revolution will find its champion in the

mythological figure of Hercules. Hercules is an invincible hero who effectively embodies the values of revolutionary eroticism: strength, ardour, and prowess. In the text, the author praises the so-called Hercules' position which requires lovers of power and strong muscles. Throughout the manual, the man is often referred to as the figure of Hercules. An example from the first position illustrates this: 'notre Hercule lui passe l'instrument dans le postérieur' (17). The direct association of the reader with the mythological hero is apparent here, and for the revolutionaries, Hercules was the epitome of manliness both physically and morally. The author links the nature of pleasure with the nature of masculinity, one of energy and vigour. Physically, the man has to be gifted, in order to experience real pleasure: 'il faut pour gouter le plaisir de ce groupe charnel, que l'homme soit pourvu d'un membre d'une longue démesurée' (17). Hercules embodies this sexualised and physical aspect of masculinity through his athletic prowess and his virile features. Moreover, the Roman hero also personifies the moral virtues of the Revolution. Therefore, the re-appropriation of this figure symbolises the return to the popular and the working class. The structure of the book mirrors the twelve labours Hercules must overcome, associating sexuality with work. The twelve labours are undeniably a fundamental element of his character, and, in this text, his sexual exploits are all 'labours' which oppose him ideologically to the idleness of the aristocracy. He resembles the ordinary and hard-working revolutionary, or more specifically, the 'sans-culottes' – a radical faction of the French Revolution who imagined themselves as the antithesis of the aristocracy. They were part of the lower-class, priding themselves in their traditional values and strong work ethic. The 'sans-culottes' find their idol in Hercules, a strong working man. The author of *Les Travaux D'Hercules* not only denounces the sexuality of the old Regime and its protagonists but also claims to train the citizen, teaching him the best ways to use his body. He makes it clear from the start that he desires, through these instructions, to create a new Hercules for the Republic: 'Je forme des Hercules, des hommes extraordinaires enfin, en développant dans l'être organisé les facultés viriles de l'humaine nature'(6). The aim of the author mirrors the mission of Hercules in his book, to restore strength and vigour to the sexuality of the patriots. Through this representation of masculinity, we discover a subliminal message, one of propaganda. The manual does not only aim to indulge the reader's pleasures but seeks a greater goal, that of the creation of the ideal patriot and revolutionary.

Although *Les Travaux d'Hercule* was published in the early years of the Revolution, we find in it traces of radical thinking and behaviour. This desire to eradicate the Ancient Regime and its nobility and create a new army, translates into sentiments of violence visible in this text. Indeed, the language used even in the title is symbolic of this phenomenon. This somewhat violent and energetic sexuality is embodied in the omnipresence of the word 'foutre' (8) and its derivatives during the Revolution. The verb designates and expresses through this gesture the erotic ardour and the vigour of the body. Revolutionary sexuality finds in it a perfect

lexical mirror: fast, fertile and energetic. This crude but also violent term reveals a relation of domination between the man and the woman, and a brutal understanding of the body and sexuality in general. These virulent terms and lexical fields seem to foreshadow the events of the Terror, a time in which violence and brutality reigned. The twelfth and final position described in the manual encapsulates this sexual violence vividly. The title '*La bonne manière ou celle du bougrement patriotique du Père Duchesne*' suggests that this position epitomises the sexuality of the perfect citizen and references the Hébertist journal, Le Père Duchesne. Founded by the journalist Jacques Herbert, the Hébertists were a radical and violent revolutionary group that supported and encouraged the extreme events that occurred during the Terror. In his newspaper, Herbert used the figure of 'Père Duchesne', an honest but crude foul-mouthed sans-culotte to express his views on the Revolution (Shusterman, 2014: 156). Thus, the reference to this character in *Les Travaux d'Hercule* reveals the violent political undertones of the text. The author's aim might not be limited to creating simply a 'good citizen' but in fact may be to incite them to become bold and strong fighters in the war or in the Terror yet to come. The body is once again used as a political weapon, the strong sexual imagery serving as a metaphor for the greater dynamics within revolutionary France, one of violence and struggle for power.

The twelfth position described in the manual hides another power dynamic, the relationship between the man and the woman. Everything is radicalised, the language and the imagery no longer imply a subtle domination of the male but an explicit and violent one. Any remnants of eroticism are buried under the foul abuses. The representation of the sexual act here establishes a clear dynamic of domination, even victimisation. The first few lines illustrate this vividly: 'Il faut, sacré nom d'un million de cons vérolés! pour foutre à la manière bougrement patriotique de l'énergique père Duchesne, empoigner par la cotte une garce à cul, et lui ouvrir, sacré triple nom d'une vieille tétasse! sa vilaine foutue fressure de vache'10 (60). The manner here in which the intercourse is described emphasises, in an extreme and excessive way, the vigour of Hercules. This text verbally reinforces the violent nature of the relationship, described by a filthy lexicalisation of the female body. The woman is barely reduced to her private parts and is completely dehumanised. In the representation of a strong and virile sexual figure embodied by Hercules, the act of love transforms into one of domination and rejection of the feminine more generally. '*Le père Duchesne*' magnifies and exacerbates the revolutionary zeal, and through this excessively parodic text, mocks aristocratic softness; it highlights the violence of the relationship between a vigorous revolutionary who victimises, verbally and physically, his partner, if she is even deemed worthy of that role. As Bourdieu points out, masculinity is constantly defined and moulded by its relationship to femininity: 'une notion éminemment relationnelle, construite devant et pour les autres hommes et contre la féminité, dans une sorte de peur du féminin'11 (Bourdieu, 1998, 78). In the source, the exclusion and belittlement

of women are perhaps symptomatic of a threatened masculinity. Many women during the Revolution rose to prominence and were given the opportunity for political involvement. Women's political clubs and the publication of Olympe de Gouges' 'Declaration of the Rights of Women' in 1791, contributed to the emergence of women's political engagement. However, this was not always well received by the wider public with women's clubs being banned and key feminist writers, including De Gouges, being executed (Foley, 2004: 5). Ideals of masculinity created during the Revolution became a reaction to this growing feminist movement through the portrayal of all-powerful and dominant male figures such as Hercules. Bourdieu's theory becomes relevant again here, as he insists that masculinity must be examined in relation to women and their power. The all-mighty strength and manliness of Hercules, paradoxically, proves to be his vulnerability. Through a discourse of objectification and victimisation of women in *Les Travaux d'Hercule*, we can see the desire to eradicate all threats to its power. Similar to the demonisation of the libertine and aristocracy but more subtly, the projection of this ideal of masculinity exists to defend itself from women and their growing power.

Analysing *Les Travaux d'Hercule ou la Rocambole de la Fouterie* through an anthropological lens allows us to understand the embodied power dynamic that occurred during the French Revolution. Thanks to Bourdieu's theoretical framework, we were able to explore the significance of the body and sexuality within its social and political context and examine how the perception of a sexualised ideal of masculinity becomes a testimony to the wider social structures during the late 18th century in France. The rejection of the 'old' ideal of masculinity through the mockery of their feeble and effeminate bodies was symptomatic of a desire to distance or even eradicate the Ancient Regime and what it represented. The figure of Hercules and his depiction as a sexually vigorous hero demonstrated the imperative need to create a physically and morally strong emblem of the Revolution. However, this revealed the excessive and radical undertones of the text encouraging a violent perspective on sexuality and, more importantly, on the Revolution itself. Paradoxically, this excess of violence and domination unveiled a hidden meaning, a defensive stance against the growing power of women during the Revolution leading to a threatened masculinity. Through this source and its sexual representation of bodies, we have therefore delved into the Revolutionary cosmology, mapping their desires and fears, both sexual and political.

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Ethnographic encounter with historical source material: 'The Bridge of Sighs' (1844) by Thomas Hood

By Xena White

The 18- stanza poem 'The Bridge of Sighs' (1844) was written in the early Victorian Era by Thomas Hood. It takes a progressive stance on the subject of a woman who due to her fall, commits suicide by drowning. The iconography of this poem must be understood not as a depiction of how female suicide took place in reality, but rather of how it took place in Victorian consciousness. Strongly gendered views on suicide constructed this representation and between the 1840s and the 1880s, the fallen woman drowning herself became an essential trope of 'a new iconographic vocabulary' (Meessen 2017: 8). Hood's depiction then can be seen as referencing the dominant image of the time. But for an understanding of the implicit and explicit attitudes expressed within 'The Bridge of Sighs', we have to look to Hood's position within society. Born in comfortable mediocrity, and early inured to narrow fortunes (Rossetti 1900) Hood lived a relatively easy life and became well established in the literary community. His social world predominantly consisted of male writers such as Charles Lamb, Thomas Persson De Quincy and his brother-in-law was the poet John Hamilton. The activist undercurrent of the poem first appears as contrary to the educated male metropolitan perspective on the drowned woman. His position within that community puts him in a good place to comment upon it. To unpack the social purpose of the sympathetic tone Hood takes we must look at the prospective audience to which it is aimed. Although the media within which the poem was initially published is unknown, around this time, Hood was starting a publication of his own, *Hood's magazine*, and was also working as the editor for the humourous magazine, *Punch* (Rossetti 1900). The Victorian fascination with suicide was spread across both high and low culture, and in 1836 the press was becoming accessible to new audiences after the fourpenny newspaper duty was dropped to a penny (Rose 2002: 31). Despite this, in 1840, thirty-three percent of men and fifty percent of women were illiterate (Loyd 2007). The implication of this being that the male metropolitan educated class from which he originates is likely to be the audience to which its purpose is directed. Finally, in unpacking the authenticity of 'The Bridge of Sighs', it is relevant to note that it constitutes a very small portion of Hood's work which deals with more serious subjects. Well established in his comic work, commentators soon after his death have alluded to the fact that he was more prolific in this style as it appealed to popular public taste and thus 'compelled him to lay aside the tragic lyre too often,' (Thomas Hood the Younger 1868: vi). At the end of his career, unwell and close to his death, his intention to take up the 'lyre', supports the sincerity of his sympathetic tone. His positionality and audience represent the patriarchal views of his time and the inferred poetic voice and audience (surveyor) as male, is important in understanding how attitudes of gender within 'The Bridge of Sighs' are through the lens of the male gaze. The point at which patriarchal ideology is challenged or reinforced becomes the point of interest concerning the world-view of gender construction and the wider implication of this view within anthropological feminist theory

We begin in the time and place of Victorian dominant cultural consciousness, where 'fictions about women and suicide seem more prevalent than facts' (Meessen 2017: 19). In Hood's fiction, he attempts to create a corrective vision of the woman self-murderer as a victim within the society that engineered her. Through this, we inadvertently gain a window into Victorian patriarchal attitudes on gender and gendered suicide. Hood first introduces us to the woman when she is already dead. Yet her death is not just her own, it is impersonal as she is anonymized as one of many regrettable suicides, specifically female, and thus through her self-murder, she joins these others in fictional sisterhood. Initially dead - the state of ultimate passivity, the male reader-surveyor, is called to act upon her physical and spiritual body, compassionately taking her up from her fall. Together, they take her out of the water, without deliberation and replace thoughts of her sin with the sadness of her death. We then become aware of the social landscape to which she is a victim. Although told not to think critically of it, her nature is the first culprit leading to the deterministic reality of her death. Her rash disposition explains her revolt against the values of the social system. Her family is the second explanation, importantly however the family she is situated within first is Eve's family, emphasizing the gendered cause of her death. Next, it alludes to her sexual promiscuity as they are told to tie-up her hair- the focal point of a woman's sexuality, which had 'escaped' (32) the 'comb' (32) containing it. Then, she is ostracised from the family unit and speculatively a lover, who all resemble the entity to which suicide could have been resisted. Finally, as Christians, the readers are called upon for their collective responsibility in her death. She stands for the first time by herself outside of the safety of the hearth and finds discomfort in her surroundings. Discomfort in all but the bridge and the river, to which she is compelled to go. She makes her first and only active move and leaps from the judgment of our world, consumed back into nature. Only now in her death, 'pure womanly', (20) she is restored to a level of respect. Beyond this she is young, slim, and beautiful. Directed to think of her in this state, and of the immortality of man, they must act again on this now passive body, her beauty showing the ease of her death. Necessarily the body must be physically revised by hand to prepare for the ceremony of death. They leave now, passive themselves, transmitting her sins to God.

What the 21st-century reader might find peculiar in Hood's narrative is the seeming desire to depict the fallen woman as a victim, with no desire to change the suggestion that the fallen woman is inherently sinful and has no other option but her suicide. Darnton (1991) has suggested that 'when you realize you are not getting something... that is

particularly meaningful to narratives, you can see where to grasp a foreign system of meaning in order to unravel it' (Darnton 1991: 78). Her particular suicidal motives and methods are especially meaningful to Hood's sympathetic narrative so this will be our point of entry to gaining insight into Hood's attitudes on gender.

'Victorian representations of suicidal methods and motives were the products of a deeply gendered and widely-accepted dichotomy of suicidal behavior' (Deacon 2015: 24) and Hood's stereotypical fallen woman exemplifies this. Hood does not depict a suicide, but a woman's suicide. Her primary motive made clear is a suicidal intention inherent in her as a woman. 'All slips of hers' (27) are accounted to her being 'One of Eve's family' (28). Without mention of any sins actively committed, her narrative is impersonal in its reference to all women collectively across time, whom which in its biblical reference are is the type of creature who falls by nature. With this biblical reference then, the attitude created is that sin is essential to feminine nature and is a likely feminine suicidal motivation. The naturalizing of sex differences informs a belief that the genders should then have separate realms of existence. Another motive illuminates this view. It is reiterated many times that she is 'houseless by night' (62) and estranged from family relations. It is not then wholly her lack of personal economic or emotional support as stressors that is alluded to, but her displacement from her 'right' place in society, the domestic space to which she stands outside. Ostracised at the time of her suicide, she stands in the dark outside the houses of others which are 'light,' (58) 'From window and casement' (59). His isolation of her from the domestic sphere reinforces the attitude that was 'commonplace in the nineteenth century, that the traditional patriarchal family unit was the best defense against self-destruction' (Deacon 2017:13). Additionally, Hood is suggestive of her having a lover, a 'dearer one' (40) 'and a nearer one,' (41) which is not seen as a fact of her motive but an assumption of those finding an explanation of her suicide. Victorians were obsessed with finding a story of seduction or abandonment to accompany a suicide. Margret Moyes committed suicide by jumping from the Monument in London in 1839, and Jane Cooper's jumped from the same monument three years later. These were two such cases where during the inquest of both, the newspapers 'all eagerly discussed the possibility she had been a victim of seduction' (Deacon 2017: 30) consulting acquaintances, workplaces and coroner's reports in the desire to find seduction as an explanation to fit a cultural narrative. The assumption being that rather than taking her life rationally, she was under the vice of her inherent emotional nature. Hood's woman does not deliberate on her decision; it is made 'rashly' (3) and 'swiftly' (69) carried out. The motives of Hood's self-murderer then give us a window into how he viewed femininity. The world he depicts is one in which she is at the mercy of her essential nature as a sinful, irrational, and emotional woman. Relevant to the conditions in which it was produced, he reinforces the patriarchal ideology that women are made inferior, either by nature or by virtue of their dependency on men. This worldview is further elaborated on by the *modus operandi* of her suicide.

The symbolic ramifications of her suicide by drowning is relevant in understanding Hood's feminization of suicide. Bachelard notes that water can be seen as 'the true matter of a very feminine death' (Bachelard in Meessen 2017: 32). This is in representation rather than reality as the preferred methods of female suicide were poisoning or hanging (Meessen 2017: 26). Her death by drowning is thus symbolic of her femininity. Firstly the act of drowning in water has rich biblical imagery of baptism and that relates to the redemptive nature of suicide that our woman experiences. Only after her death, she 'Now is pure womanly,' (20) the emphasis on the 'now', (20) referencing the immediate transformative nature of her suicide cleansing her sins. Beyond this, however, the symbol of water constitutes many associations of femininity that Hood has already alluded to in the women's suicidal motives. The fickle, fluid, fertile, and passivity of water make the method of being consumed by it seeming fitting for her death.

Thus far Hood seems to create a quintessential depiction of femininity and feminized suicide that embodies the patriarchal views of the time. How this relates to his tender tone of compassion is 'where to grasp' and 'unravel' a further level to his system of gendered meaning. In aiming to create compassion in the reader, which is likely to be male, he makes the woman a victim. The effect of this being, she no longer possesses agency. The exception to this is in her actual act of suicide in which she 'plunged boldly' (72) to her death. This active motion cuts across the rest of the poem in which she is either still, when alive, or ultimately passive in death. The implication of her action is significant as her suicide is that which gives her the 'now' (20) 'pure' (20) status. Fallen women who committed suicide were considered more sympathetically than those who lived in shame and dishonor (Auerbach 1980: 50). This very fact demonstrates the marginality of her agency and also limits the progressiveness of Hood's asking for our sympathy.

The marginality of her agency is in committing suicide, yet this is her only honorable option. In asking sympathy for her in her already pure state, where no sympathy is asked for pre-death, Hood reconstructs the convention that women will only receive sympathy through this singular redemptive resolution to their sin. This tone of compassion takes away from the agency given to her on an even deeper level. The passive nature of her body creates a relationship with the male reader surveyor who through this compassion can act upon her body both physically and mentally. This avenue endows the male reader with the authority to 'take her,' (13) and 'touch her,' (13) handing over the agency to the man and fulfilling their patriarchal desire to control women. This is most predominant in the last few stanzas where the men prepare her body for death, they 'smooth' (87) and 'compose' (87) her 'limbs', (84) 'close' (88) her eyes, and 'cross her hands' (100) 'over her breast.' (102) Being framed as a kindness to the woman conceals their control over her. Her objectification is also clear through the eroticization of her body. Despite having just committed

suicide, her beauty shines through. Physically she is 'slenderly' (7) 'young and so fair,' (8) her body shape is exposed by her 'clinging' (10) 'garments.' (9) All of these erotic elements such as the wiping of her 'poor lips' (29) would be culturally inappropriate if they occurred explicitly in an art form. Berger (1972) discusses how Eve's fall, as told in Genesis, is the time at which women are made subservient to man and become aware of their nudity. In art forms expanding time, Eve's fall is depicted as a moment of her shame but the shame in these representations is in relation 'to the spectator' (Berger 1972: 49). The Christian moral necessity to depict the fall of Eve offers an avenue of spectatorship for the audience, to look upon the fallen women, who would not be able to be depicted nude without this biblical message.

The fall of Hood's woman and the audience's passing judgement on her can then be regarded in the same way. This is exemplified not only in the poetic voice or audience participation of spectatorship but also by fictional spectators who accompany the poem in the form of etches. Lord Fitzgerald's etched illustration in '*passages from the Poems of Thomas Hood*' (Fitzgerald 1858 (in Meessen 2017: 54) depicts an exclusively male group surrounding the passive body of the woman, their voyeuristic expressions replacing the compassion that the poem prescribes. Thus the sight of her as an object, 'stimulates the use of it as an object' (Berger 1972: 54). The perspective the source offers explicitly is that women have natural sex differences that lead to a different and subordinate role in society. In relation to this, the opinion is that despite their nature or reason for suicide, if they commit suicide then we should treat them compassionately. The way this latter perspective manifests in the poem shows us the implicit objectification of women. The extent to which this was the intention of Hood in his poem is difficult to isolate. The gendered system of meaning created by the poem does however seem to strongly correlate to the patriarchal perspective of the time in which it was produced.

The patriarchal desire to control women, exemplified in Hood's poem, has been an extremely relevant topic in both historical and contemporary feminist anthropological debates. The source manifests the view that inherent sex differences are an explanation for the subordination of women. This explanation has been used as a ground from which the patriarchy maintains gendered inequality. This is relevant to the ambitions of second-wave feminists. They saw the ability to relate gendered difference to something which is not inherent in sex as an avenue for changing gendered inequality. Rosaldo (1974) took up this debate and examined the separation of the domestic and public spheres. She utilized this separation to find an explanation of the subordination of women which is not rooted in their 'essential' nature as Hood suggested, but instead as rooted in the sexual division of labour. The source however is perhaps even more significant in anthropological debates due to the questions it raises about the objectification of women.

There are wider implications for what is implicitly shown within the source, both in the local culture the source was produced in but also across time, in all patriarchal societies. The implication of the source that I have shown here is that men survey women, and thus women survey themselves. Taking a Foucauldian understanding of the body as a mechanism for social control, we can see how the perspective of the poem could be embodied in the lives of women. Embodying this perspective, women would survey themselves to stay on the path of virtue through fear of suicide. As the Samaritans worried, if they believed they had sinned then they would be more likely to commit suicide, as the glamorization of it promised 'young girls both a reinstatement of their respectability after death as well as the attention they had often craved for in their difficult lives' (Meessen 2015: 56). This self- surveillance still structures the consciousness and behaviour of women today.

Due to the patriarchal desire of control, Benson (1997) has explored how we unconsciously self-discipline ourselves through body monitoring in alignment with dominant cultural values. This self-surveillance can then get out of control leading to issues such as anorexia. She details the clear gendered inequality within this, as under patriarchal forms of control this self-disciplining is more prevalent in the lives of women. Pitts (2003) explores this through body modification. She looks at narratives of real bodies which have been sites of physical abuse and show's how they try to claim their bodies back through scarification, piercings and tattoos. Despite their acknowledgement that they are acting with agency, they are inevitably a recipient of objectification through fetishization in commercial and artistic domains, 'being constructed as the object of the male gaze' (Jones in Pitts 2003: 56). 'The Bridge of Sighs' then not only offers us an invaluable insight into systems of gendered meaning and specifically the feminization of suicide within the dominant Victorian cultural consciousness of its time, but it gives us insight into how the relationship between the male surveyor and the female object of surveillance still structures the consciousness of many women today.

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APPENDIX

Arthur Quiller-Couch,
The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse. 1922
The Bridge of Sighs
By Thomas Hood

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly, 5

Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements; 10

Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully; 15

Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly. 20

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her 25

Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily. 30

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home? 35

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one 40

Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun! 45

O, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly 50

Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged. 55

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement, 60

She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch, 65

Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere 70

Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly—
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran—
Over the brink of it, 75

Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly, 80

Lift her with care; Fashion'd so
slenderly,
Young, and so fair!
Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly, 85

Decently, kindly,

Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring 90

Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily, 95

Spurr'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly 100

As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness, 105

Her sins to her Saviour!

Intersectionality

By Natalie Wong Jiayi

Introduction

Before starting this reflective essay, I acknowledge that the work of feminist anthropologists is not timeless and covers a vast range of ideas such that I do not assert that my learning condensed here is in any way exhaustive. The poem I wrote below speaks to the unevenness of inequality, focusing on intersectionality, multiple axes of gendered inequality, and resistance through corporeal practices.

L1 Gender inequality is not equal

I am not even equal
To the sum of my parts which is not
and never is equal
To you:
L5 My skin is not peelable, but I/we
peel it anyway
Orange skin or organic skin – peel
Can you tell the difference?
I move too quickly for ~~the patriarchy~~ you to tell the difference
Slap/silence me anyway
L10 But not in the same way as you do
her

If I listen, I am obedient;
Honourable.
If I listen but don't follow through I
am not obedient.
If I don't listen but follow through I
am disobedient.
Listen to me now:
L15 Stop telling me what I can(not) do

What I should(not) look like
What I would be if I just
Stop for a moment and listen
To another man, another ad.
L20 Switch state.

(Do) I (do) have to escape
But it is my mind
So it is mine
I have to destroy
L25 My body and

My mind is no longer mine
How far can I run within the corners
of my mind
Within the corners of this earth
Where is my place find me
L30 My place

I have no place to escape

Intersectionality and the Socially Constructed "Skin"

In my poem, I wrote 'genderinequality is not equal' (L1) becausethe way that various aspectsof an individual ('the sum of my parts') (L3) – race, gender, class, social and historical contexts – aregiven social meaning and how the positions individuals havewithin various hierarchiesaffectindividuals differently. I found thiscrucially important to understandanyform of inequality. We must holistically analysethe various inequalities that intersect, compound and asymmetrically amplify the experienceof exclusion and oppressionof individuals and communities.

I found that Elizabeth Chin's (1999) *Ethnically Correct Dolls: Toying with the Sex Industry* provided a good model to understandinequality through intersectionality. It gavea clear exampleof the importance of intersectionality when adopting measuresto addressinequality. I found it extremelyfrustrating to readthat in an attempt to 'addressthe problem of minority representation'(Chin 1999:305), Mattel's black Shanidolls not only failed to addressinequality and exclusion, but instead cementedit further. The dolls could 'only incompletely embodythe experiencesof kids who are not simply racial beings, but also poor, working class, young, ghettoized, and gendered'(Chin 1999:306). The failure of the Shani dolls stemmednot only from their inability to addressthe other axesof inequalities that the children faced, but also cemented and reproduced the exoticisation and idealised stereotypical featuresof minority groups. I could not comprehendhow large companieslike Mattel could fail repeatedly over the years- not just in this instanceof the black Shanidolls but in various 'ethnic' or 'world' Barbies- to closethe gapand fill the missing spacesof other ethnic groups in the toy industry. Mattel alsopoorly representedmy own ethnic group in their 2004depiction of a 'Chinoiserie' Barbie scantily clad in a 'pyjama suit' (Figure 1) with stereotypically smaller eyes(Mattel 2020). The "China Barbie Doll", releasedin 2011, had a product description 'Ni hao! That'show I sayhello!' (Mattel 2020). This mademe question how much sincerity Mattel investedin its effort to bridge the minority gapwhen the dolls they produced bordered on racist.

Instead of confronting raceasa social construct and subjective experience, Mattel's dolls emphasisedrace basedon physical features and cementedidealistic, stereotypical imaginings of the featured minority groups. While I acknowledge that there wasan attempt to include different ethnic groups, the dolls drew on Western notions of race asbased on 'differenceand phenotype' (Chin 1995:308)and '[reproduced] the error of misplaced concreteness'(Chin 1995:307). The obsessionwith locating racial differenceonly in physical, visible markers obscures how these features areimbued with socially constructed symbolic meaning to signify race. This mademe think of how, despite progressive changes, many still baseideas of sexand gender on dominant hegemonicideasof masculinity and femininity, greatly emphasisingthe divide between the two. Theseideas and symbols are meaningful only insofar aswe give meaningand significance to them.

Howeversymbolic or immaterial 'social constructs' may seem, they have concrete and material consequencesfor thereality of individualsliving within hierarchical structures that excludeand oppressthem. I alsofound it disturbing that the underlying discourse/ideaof the 'ethnically correct' dolls wasbasedon an inverted logic that 'toys … areresponsible for the children'sperceptions [self-hatred and racism], not the societythat produces them' (Chin 1991:310). Disturbed as it mademe feel, is this not the hyper-consumerist world we live in? From commercial products to social media, material things havebecomepart of our understanding of self and a tool for social relations. While social media appearsto focus more on social interaction than dolls, I felt that the underlying trend is similar. Both fundamentally presentan idealised 'Other' or 'Self'. Social media hasbeen transformed, engineered, and monetisedto more than just allowing social connection, it hascemented idealised versionsof both Other and Self. Similarly for genderedinequalities, when unmanaged, the individual could internalise commentsabout their supposed'failure' to emulate the perfectly gendered body basedon ideas of femininity and masculinity. It is on the 'skin' and body that socially constructed ideas of race, gender and other inequalities are marked. Scientifically, the 'skin is not peelable'(L5), in a sense that physically it is difficult for us to peel awaythe characteristics that are socially imbued with meaning, but 'I/we peel it anyway' speaksto our resistanceand the malleability of thesesocially constructed meaningsand inequalities.

Multiple Axes of Gendered Inequality

In the poem I underlined 'the patriarchy' to showhow the dominant understanding (evenmy own, prior to reading more widely feminist anthropological texts) is rooted in male dominance over female submissionand the heteronormativity bias. I cancelledout 'the patriarchy' and used 'you' instead to recentre the focus to understand varied forms of gendered inequality presentin other relationships and settings. I admit I do not fully understand how genderedinequality permeatesand works in all various arenas

and relationships, but here I attempt to reflect on (1) how we can question dominant Western assumptions, and (2) the role of the state in producing and perpetuating gendered inequalities.

Divergence from a Singular Western Gaze

I found Strathern's 1984 text on women and exchange in Highlands New Guinea helpful and important as she advocated different models of thinking. She showed how the Western understanding of the subject:object dichotomy was too fixed in ideas of personhood, agency and 'control over the product of [the individual's] own labour' (Strathern 1984:162, emphasis added), or the lack of it to fully analyse the exchange of women and their labour. Women, regarded as 'valuables … are not always treated as objects in the Western sense, [and] are not to be understood as 'property' if property entails objectification' (Strathern 1984:164). Regardless of how convinced I was of her narration of the Hagen model of thought, I found the underlying principle more important and crucial. I feel that as an anthropologist investigating any society, we have a moral and ethical responsibility to our interlocutors and their society to portray their understandings as accurately as possible and utilise their ways of thinking to understand their society. While it is impossible to neutralise our thought from cultural biases, it is important to recognise and be open to local ways of thinking. My anxiety of how we would truly know what inequality looks like in a society (let alone measure it) is soothed only by Leacock's repeated emphasis on the importance of analysing '*qualitatively different relations*' (1992:225, emphasis added), rather than quantitatively measuring inequality. I find this extremely important for fear we reproduce an added layer of inequality through our anthropological text, positioning our voice over that of the 'Other'.

State Control over Women's, but Not Men's, Bodies

After reading more feminist anthropological texts, I felt that my understanding of patriarchy was the centrepiece of gendered inequality. Reading Hill Gates' 1989 study of late imperial China, I saw how the patriarchy had social, political, and material consequences on the lives of Chinese women.

While there is much more that Gates has covered in the text, I focused on her analysis of Chinese characters. She points out that the family (家 jia) was a 'microcosm of the great guojia [国家] or "nation-family"' (Gates 1989:801, Chinese characters added). I included the simplified Chinese character (国家) because in contrast to the traditional Chinese writing, 國家, each seemed to suggest different nuances. Chinese characters each have their individual meanings and strokes which are not arbitrary but can be an amalgamation of different characters or visually represent an idea. While Gates focused on the second character (家) which means family, I found the first character to be of just as much significance. The traditional version (國家) has the character 域 within it, which refers to fief or land. Compared to the simplified version (国家) which includes the character 王 or 玉, which means King and jade respectively, this implies ideas of patriarchy and wealth more directly than 'fief' or 'land'. While there may not be much concrete significance or symbolism here, I found it interesting that in ancient Imperial China, patriarchal ideas were conflated with the state and family, despite it not featuring prominently in writing. Simplified Chinese was only established in 1949, after the Republican Revolution ended the reign of the last Emperor. While the ideas of patriarchy appeared less authoritative, as there was no longer an emperor with a heavenly mandate to dictate cultural norms and rule of law, fundamental ideas of the state control over women's bodies were still heavily influential.

For me, the most profound/disturbing concept, also echoed in other feminist anthropological readings, is the control of the body by the state, indirectly or directly. In late imperial China, 'the pressure on women to bear sons was especially intense', because males provided a labour force and brought capital for the family, and '[g]ood women submit, always to male authority' (Gates 1989:813). The state promoted cultural value systems which enforced 'women's submission to extreme pronatalism as well as to labor discipline' (Gates 1989:818). In 1979, China introduced the one-child policy in order to curb China's rapidly growing population. It still remained that boys were favoured over girls. This policy sat on the other extreme end of the spectrum of state control over the sexual bodies of women – they may only have one child, and that child should be male.

This also brought to mind Roberts' (2012) description of Ecuadorian women's body being in an indirect relationship with the state. I felt that the examples of Chinese and Ecuadorian women presented both ends of the spectrum of Foucault's (1977) idea of the body as subject to technical disciplinary processes and management such that the social and political norms are embodied and embedded within the self-disciplining body (McVeigh 1997:217, in Ashikari 2003:7). Women in imperial China were disciplined by the state and wider social and economic norms to produce more children. In contrast, Ecuadorians tried to distance themselves from the state and public care, which was marked by the caesarean section scar, which symbolised 'upward mobility … [and that] they could not give birth "normally", that they had the means to overcome their dysfunction, and that they were not made subject to state neglect in public medical facilities' (Roberts 2012:233). However, I understood this act in itself as a self-disciplining act that reproduced gendered inequality, since '[e]lite men's bodies remain potent while caesarean section disciplines and limits elite women to two children' (Roberts 2012:221). Despite the caesarean section scar being seen by the women as Whitening and differentiating themselves 'from their browner, poorer empleadas' (Roberts 2012:225), I could not help but think that while they succeeded in securing a better position along the racial/class hierarchy

and resisted the control of the state over their bodies, they reproduced gendered inequalities. Women's bodies had to be invaded, while men's remained untouched.

Resistance

In this final section, I reflect on the different modes of resistance – whether they are a 'resistive resilience' or an internalisation of the gendered inequalities. Mikiko Ashikari's fieldwork of middle-class Japanese women in 1996-1997 showed how resistance against the dominant 'ideological division by gender – *soto* (outside the home)/men and *uchi* (home)/women' (Ashikari 2003:4), involved balancing resistance and accommodating what is 'proper, normal' (Ashikari 2003:23). I found the concept of 'multiplicity of selves, subjectivities and identities' particularly helpful in seeing forms of resistance not as a straightforward defiance, but a calculated act and risk, where the individual also had to perform and behave within the dominant gender discourse in order to negotiate the benefits that arise from power structures. 'Wild' women acted in ways which resisted the dominant gender ideology, but '[w]hen they go to work, they wear the standard color of foundation, instead of a darker tone, even though their bodies are now tanned' (Ashikari 2003:25). This was necessary to 'negotiate better positions within gender relations' and also 'accommodate to *soto* by taking a subject position of "subordinated women", [to] gain power over men' (Ashikari 2003:20). I felt that this reflected 'resistive resistance', a term I use to allude to the idea that resistance does not always entail or portray itself as an extreme deviation or rejection of the dominant ideology that underlies gendered inequalities. It was about nuanced, calculated resistance, and knowing when certain actions were effective and appropriate in ultimately negotiating better social positions, rather than to be taken as a passive internalisation of the discourse.

In contrast, cosmetic surgery done by Asian-American women featured in a study by Eugenia Kaw (1991) left me confused and frustrated – I could not discern whether the cosmetic surgery was truly done in resistance to the 'patriarchal definitions of femininity and to Caucasian standards of beauty' (Bordo 1990 in Kaw 1991:78), or as an internalisation of these discourses. I also found it problematic that despite her interlocutors saying that 'they are "proud to be Asian American" and that they "do not want to look white"', Kaw insists that their cosmetic surgeries were a 'potent form of self, body and society alienation' (Kaw 1991:77) and evidence of '[motivations] by a racial ideology that infers negative behavioural or intellectual characteristics from a group's genetic facial features' (1991:79). Hence, I thought that the ethnographic material Kaw drew on did not correspond directly with her inferences and analysis. As Asian myself, we are fed a diet of the standard ideals of beauty, but while it does not always necessarily imply that should we actively choose to pursue these goals, it must mean that we are passively internalising racialised and gendered beauty ideals. Furthermore, I found that Kaw's line of argument and criticism of the surgeries, seen by her as 'not … a celebration of their [own] bodies', echoed ideas raised by Pitts-Taylor (2003) in her work on bodily modifications and various feminist viewpoints. Radical feminists argue that body modifications 'violate the body and reproduce oppressive relations of power by echoing patriarchal violence' (Pitts-Taylor 2003:73). They seem to suggest that the 'pristine, natural, organic body – a body unmolested by culture – would be a primary resource for resisting patriarchy' (Pitts-Taylor 2003:54).

These two ideas left me feeling defeated, hence the line 'Orange skin or organic skin – peel / Can you tell the difference?' (poem L5-6). Orange skin depicts the/my Asian face, while organic skin represented the organic, natural body that radical feminists argue must be left untouched. My frustration arises because even when Asian women try to negotiate a better social position within racial and gendered hierarchies - no matter how superficial it may seem - through enhancing their beauty, their act of resistance is then subverted and criticised as 'not organic' or an internalisation of the hegemonic discourse. My frustration is – can you tell the difference anyway? What we choose to do with our bodies again comes under the criticism and gaze 'what I can(not) do / What I should(not) look like' (L15-16). Is this not a reproduction of the gendered inequality in discourse?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the work of feminist anthropology on gendered inequality has made me realise that the various axes of inequality intersect asymmetrically and produce vastly different experiences of exclusion and oppression. Feminist anthropology on gendered inequality has also given me the vocabulary and tools to analyse gendered inequalities and locate them in relations and situations other than just the patriarchy and conjugal relationships. While I found the notions of the 'idealised Other' and 'Self' based on physical traits to be frustratingly intractable in the discourse and practice of gendered inequality, I also felt hopeful when reading about various resistive practices. Perhaps it is time to shift the discourse from one of reducing exclusion to increasing inclusion. This entails actively taking into consideration local models of thinking to analyse gendered inequalities and resistive corporeal practices. I found it paramount to empathetically understand the conditions and limitations in which the women found courage and space to engage in resistive practices. While there is more to be said on the limitations and effectiveness of these practices, I found that framing resistive practices in certain ways could either empower or reproduce structures of inequality. Hence, reading the works of feminist anthropologists helped me to understand gendered inequalities through multiple perspectives, but also left me frustrated when nuances were not fully taken into consideration.

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Against Hijras as the Quintessential 'Third Sex,': Gayatri Reddy Book Review

By Xena White

Gender and sexuality studies are a hot topic in the field of anthropology, with certain groups of people being typified in these debates through the assumption of their sexual differences. Hijras, phenotypic men who undergo sacrificial emasculation and wear female attire, are such an identity under the scrutiny of researchers that have aimed to capture their lives, or alimited version of them, for application within their ethnographies, films, or newspaper projects. Yet the diversity of their lives is evident from their renouncement of sexual desires as an ascetic yet operational relationship for sex work or intimate relationships with their 'husbands', to their Muslim self-identification whilst gaining ritual power from the Hindu goddess Bedhraj Mata. This shows that there is much more at stake in hijra identity than accountable for by a bound placement within the category of quintessential 'third sex'. Gayatri Reddy aims to break down this boundary in her rigorous yet sensitive ethnography, 'With respect to sex, negotiating hijra identity in South India' (2006). This appears temporally at the end of, and reactionary against, the surge of attention on hijras as she theoretically repositions them as an identity embodied through multiple axes of subjective difference. Drawn from extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the Southern Indian twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, we are introduced to a more marginalized group of kandra hijras (predominantly sex workers) who become the author's main ethnographic confidants and friends. Containing great theoretical interest, we are taken on a journey of repositioning. The ethnographic attraction to her intersectional approach intrigues the reader when Reddy's positionality as a native Hyderabad Indian woman from an upper-middle-class background intersects the world of hijras.

Reddy's target at hand is to argue against the essentialized vision of the third sex, often defined as neither men nor women, with hijras as the quintessential example of this. Instantiating the perspective that all thirdness is not alike, she utilizes her ethnographic fieldwork to articulate the position that hijra identity must be understood through multiple axes of interpretation in which differences of religion, kinship, and class, as well as sexuality and gender, construct this. Extending a Foucaultian framework of sex and sexuality to other aspects of hijra individuality, a perspective of embodied practice becomes the lens to which the vision of izzat (respect) is the social medium of exchange by which authenticity and identity are determined. Implemented in the cartography of her thesis – antecedent to her purpose at hand – is the need for good justification in carrying out of her fieldwork. Conducting her research during a time of great displeasure among hijras at being the focus of researcher scrutiny is acknowledged. Therefore, their desire for

fair representation is utilized by Reddy as her reason for refocusing their past-time positioning to one where the cornucopia of their life experience is acknowledged. Whether her justification is valid, is then evidenced in how successfully she carries out this purpose.

Chapter 1 introduces you to the research setting and subjects, leaving you intrigued to see their developing narratives from this initial ethnographic encounter. Reddy then delves into a long and complex consideration of previous thematical framing of hijra identity within the category of third sex more broadly (Chapter 2). We are thus submerged into a long sexual historiography of hijras, extensively embedded with secondary sources on our journey through religious, colonial, and contemporary analyses. The most profitable of which is her use of these representations to make the methodological criticism that those who frame hijras do so with the prerequisite of a personal, academic, or colonial agendas, giving us an insight into the effects of the specific vantage point from which they frame. This culminates in the critique of contemporary analyses, most effectively in a critique on the shortcomings of the best-celebrated book on hijras. Her criticism of Serena Nadas Neither Man Nor Woman (32) uncovers the thought-provoking perspective that in this book the analysis of hijras as having an institutionalized third gender role serves the framing agenda of de-mystifying notions of 'western' sex and gender binaries. Rejecting the abstraction of hijras for this purpose, and perhaps fueled by the shift in anthropology favoring an intersubjective approach, she pledges to contextualize and complicate the multiplicity of difference that constitutes their lived experience, in which this identity takes its form in the wider social structure through regulating their levels of authenticity and izzat (respect). These multiple axes of identity are laid out as an embodied practice by which the configuration of sex/gender identity is performative in acts of difference rather than the anatomical difference (chapter3); within legitimization through corporeal requirements of asexuality and transformation through emasculation (chapter 4); within religious enactments of Muslim identity assimilated with Hindu elements which crafts their difference by forms of bodily practice such as eating specificities, religious apparel requirements and circumcision (Chapter 5); through the practice of production of gender by the taking of hormones to sculpt the body, to differentiate their identity publicly with a specialist hand clapping, or by highlighting their identity intentionally by exposing their lack of genitalia (Chapter 6); or crafting a sense of self through the ritual placing of a rit in a lineage house (Chapter 7). Throughout the reading of this book, the fact that at times it can be difficult to digest simply matches the success in its capturing of the complexity of life in which hijras must be understood as full subjective beings.

The main coverage of the methodological application within her fieldwork setting comes to light in the opposition of others. Reddy succeeds in highlighting that durable commitment to any analytic perspective can lead to confirmation bias, in which research data is skewed by overlooking factors that do not fit into the synthesis of a thesis. As noted, this is strongest in her critique of the methodology of contemporary third-sex analysis, which comes in the post-colonial setting, engaging hijras as a center of cross-cultural understanding of the construction of gender categories where they are lumped together with other 'non-western' sites of binary gender – an analytic framework by which the domain of their sexual practice becomes detached from other important domains un-extractible from it. What can be seen as a rejection of exoticizing otherness in the game of 'west' versus 'the rest', her ethnographic methodological commitment to an intersectional analysis by crafting hijras as composite subjects is indeed a move in the right direction and can be revered for initiating theoretical progression in the field of gender and sexuality studies. This not only plays out within her ethnographic method but also her method in structuring each chapter of her book. Fairly consistently Reddy launches each chapter with a vignette of varying lengths, but in my opinion, not long enough to create a full immersion into hijra subjectivity. This initial platform then springs into an analysis of her point at hand. Yet, as you feel it is reaching its head, it gets subjected to further complication, de-constructing flaws in previous analysis or being compared to counter-examples from another hijra's contradictory experience. Whilst making the book a more challenging read for those who are not well apt in anthropological literature, it should also be celebrated for this perspective as a rigorous commitment to representing multiple instead of unitary categories of being. Also, multiple dimensions of sexual difference rightly require multiple avenues of analysis to transform the superimposed stability common in many ethnographic texts to a more dynamic version of authenticity.

Whilst her implementation of an intersectional methodological approach is discussed in her fieldwork data as being the means of crafting an identity explanation of her hijra community, a less explicitly mentioned force of intersectionality present is how her positionality within the field through multiple identities of subjectivity collides with theirs. Under the scrutiny of some categories of being, Reddy can be seen as being in a prime ethnographic position. Native to Hyderabad and of Indian ethnicity, she is not restrained by the barriers often faced by the anthropologist who comes into the field needing to learn a new regional dialect or a whole new language. Aside from this, her emic perspective privileges the book with occasional personal anecdotes which shine a light on how hijras are perceived in other settings. From descriptions of her seeing childhood playground imitations of the hijra trade-mark hand clap, to comments made by friends and relatives both before and during her research, these allow us a view of the perception of hijras within the wider public eye of the Hyderabad community. Despite the potential benefits of this, with all positionality comes an individual's deterministic characteristics which in effect change the objectivity of their view or their access to the field. Reddy's position as a woman from a middle-upper-class background has such an effect.

In the very first paragraph of the first chapter, one of Reddy's informants discusses her initial impressions of her as a young boy. Despite wearing a salwar-kurta dress frequently worn by young women, her 'hair was so short that we thought, "It cannot be a woman" (129). In this initial positioning of the ethnographic subjects and the ethnographer's relationality to them, the length of her hair is used as a primary gauge to mark gender. Yet for Reddy, in her different upbringing, this highlights that she is part of a global India, something her class privileged her access to. Reading the text with perhaps an overly critical eye on positionality, her specific lens of analysis, whilst having the ambition of being multi-perspective, can be seen to be biased by virtue of her positionality. For example, her first recorded hijra encounter was one-directional, with Reddy having a 'moment to observe her before she saw me walking up', in which the hijra as the object of observation becomes scrutinized based on her 'very-dark complexion' and synthetic sari material (14). Whilst potentially being objective observations, they are significant because they are her first observations within the wider context of Indian culture where skin color is an important differentiator of class. Finally, her positionality can also be seen to affect the scope of her research data. When considering the inclusion in her book of the men to whom hijras have sex with, occupationally and as partners, arguably very important to understanding an element of hijras' sexual difference, she was inhibited due to her being a 'respectable, middle-class Indian woman, with her own 'fears and inhibitions associated with normative gender and class prescriptions" (49). Overall, despite her positionality inevitably affecting her field data in terms of scope, collection, and processing, for a text which prides itself on presenting a hijra identity unbiased from the researcher's analytical frameworks, it would have been nice to see more reflexivity on how her class, sex and gender, among other elements of axes, intersect the process of representation within the research.

A final note, aimed specifically at the ethnographic field site, is that it brings up the core characteristic of the practice of fieldwork through the determinants of chance and reciprocity. The unpredictability of true life is often mirrored in the field, and Reddy's ethnography is a prime example of this, with apprehensions about her fieldwork setting not matching up to its final reality. Whilst Hyderabad was the initial site of choice, and the hijron ka allawahs (of a larger hijra lineage) were the targets of research, she was deterred from approaching them due to their non-hijra weariness (11). Her final locus of fieldwork un-foreshadowed was in a community of Secunderabad hijras, countering her belief that hijras only lived in the old city of Hyderabad. Additionally, her access to the field was through unpredicted means; her dad's cleaner, who also worked as a policeman, showed her the way to the 'tanki' hijras on his way to work (14). These initial chance variables thus affect the whole scope of the book as the subjects are kandra, hijra sex workers instead of badhi temple and ritual workers, opening the hijra experience up to a different sense of community with varying levels of izzat being symbolically applied accordingly within their positionality to wider society. Reciprocity within this particular hijra group then becomes fundamental in a network of exchange where the gathering of anthropological data can leave a debt. This can be seen through the various roles Reddy played in the community, such as taking them to the optometrist, accompanying them to buy saris, and calling electrolysis centers about their treatment. This text, thus, is a lovely example of how an initial chance ethnographic setting and subject begin the relationship with a healthy amount of mutual distrust, but then over the two years, developed into a close friendship. This close friendship, however, ends on a sobering note as in the post-script, when surprising her hijra friends after a time away she finds at her dismay their homes destroyed and the news of the death of her closest friends caused by AIDs. The ethnographic relationship, thus, shows the humanistic nature of the book and despite its ability to administer abstract analysis, it retains sensitivity to the very real human relationship to which the data is founded on.

Chapter 7 is one of Reddy's most convincing chapters that challenges sexuality and gender performativity as sufficient to explain hijra identity as it displays the complex and dynamic kinship contexts as crucial for life as a hijra. Hijras often face ostracism from wider society and separation from their natal families by the requirements of their self-identified states as ascetics. Family, however, becomes redefined in the webs of signification between other hijras and the wider koti community where a hijra finds their place within various affective bonds, either affectionate or structurally necessary to their hijra identification. In this chapter titled 'Our People', one person, in particular, is stressed as being of the highest importance. The guru, sitting relationally higher in the social structure than the hijra who ritually becomes instantiated as her cela. Within this power structure, the guru has the monopoly of authority over their financial earnings; when they work, their free time, and they enforce the celas requirement to obediently carry out domestic tasks by making the consequence of disobedience verbal or physical abuse. Despite the anticipation of reciprocity by the means of fair treatment and teaching of customs, the narrative more readily displayed by Reddy is the extent of the difficulties the cela faces, illuminated by graphic (in their depiction of brutality), primary ethnographic examples of the fate of unfaithful celas. The goal of Reddy in painting these scenes is to build an image that despite suffering ensued by this relationship, it is better than living alone. Reddy, thus, pieces together a convincing argument that the axis of kinship is fundamental in hijra identity as the lack of guru means a lack of izzat large enough to make the individual unrecognizable as hijra. Within this chapter, Reddy's success is in instantiating izzat again as the perspective by which kinship patterns are the axes that differentiation takes place. Additionally, she succeeds in displaying factual material in the form of a guru-cela family tree to support her point. She presents alternative arguments for the hijra requirement of kinship in their most credible form such as relational or psycho-analytic explanatory

frameworks, before disputing them, in this case on the grounds of cultural and gendered essentialism to then through their flaws instantiate the strength of her own perspective. My main criticism of this chapter is the fact that in discussing hierarchical power structures that order their lives there is no mention of the effects of the caste system, here or throughout the book. Even if this is intentionally un-included, as such a fundamental part to the structuring of Indian society, it would be useful to see her reasoning behind its absence.

In my favorite chapter (chapter 9), near the conclusion of the book, Reddy lets the ethnographic subjects speak for themselves in two extended personal narratives told by a hijra Surekha and a koti Frank. Through these emotive examples, I believe Reddy most successfully demonstrates her argument that 'each subject-position is variously determined' (210). By the narratives speaking for themselves, a life story demonstrates best the perspective that axes of difference are in a constant state of flux across time, categories, and space. These narratives and their embodied individual experience enable the mind to be cast away from disembodied theorization such as that of quintessential third sex to, instead, a local image of what is at stake. The story of Frank, a koti who marries a panti to whom he falls in love with at the cost of not only all his working income but his blood and his kidneys, only to be rejected, engaged not only my understanding of her multiple differences in ambition, but also emotionally. This was a prime example of what anthropology has to offer – the connection of people on a level of subjective understanding through the experience in this case of love and respect, whilst highlighting how these lived experiences are complexly embedded in difference.

In conclusion, despite leaving un-addressed some important axes of consideration, and the book benefiting from an even more vigilant reflexive approach, Reddy's difficult challenge in rejecting rigid gender categories and theoretically repositioning hijras as an identity embodied through multiple axes of subjective difference, is an overall success due to the careful application of data and theory through relevant means of data collection and presentation within the text. Due to the heavy weighting of its theory, I would recommend it to any student of Social Anthropology or South Asian studies and as a must-read to those interested in gender and sexuality studies to which it is a great contributor to the current theoretical evolution.

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'With Respect to sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India': Gayatri Reddy Book Review

By Romany Howarth

In 1996, anthropologist Gayatri Reddy conducted an intensive study of a group of hijras in the South Indian twin cities Hyderabad and Secunderabad through participant observation. Several years later, in 2005, Reddy published her experiences and analysis of the life of the hijras as an outstanding and insightful ethnographic account titled *With Respect to Sex: negotiating hijra identity in South India*. Gayatri is a well-established anthropologist who specialises in women and gender studies and within this book she explores in a structured and engaging manner the life and beliefs of hijras in India. Emotional and elaborate, this masterly ethnography gives an insight into the everyday struggles of living as a hijra as well as unravelling many of the misconceptions surrounding hijra identity and sexuality. Using a creative and engaging style, Reddy captures the reader through a balanced mix of story narratives, journal accounts, theory and analysis. She also explores and challenges the work of other anthropologists, such as Serena Nanda, to demonstrate the ways in which studies of hijras in the past have solely been focused on sexual performativity and gender rather than the complex array of elements which make up hijra identity such as kinship, religion, hierarchies and class. As well as providing an informative study on hijras, Reddy also explores the methods and struggles of a female anthropologist in the field, commenting on access difficulties as well as the limited outside support her position as a middle/ upper class woman caused her. As such, this book is particularly inspiring for the budding anthropologist as it provides a genuine account of what it entails to conduct fieldwork and highlights issues and challenges faced by anthropologists that are commonly brushed over in many ethnographic books.

Setting the Scene

Reddy begins her ethnographic account with a detailed and informative chapter titled, "The Ethnographic Setting". This first chapter serves as an introduction as she sets the scene for the rest of the book, introducing the narrative tone and providing a background on the hijras of Hyderabad by diving into the history of city. She explains what is generally understood by the term 'hijra': men who live as women and go through a process of altering their body to appear more feminine. This concept is elaborated on later in the book where its complexity is unravelled. For example hijra's are commonly referred to as an embodiment of the 'third sex' by scholars and some anthropologists but, Reddy challenges this theory.

Within this chapter she discusses some key obstacles that she faced, foreshadowing difficulties that she elaborates on throughout the book, in different stages

of her fieldwork. Reddy begins at the start of her fieldwork, discussing the initial difficulty in gaining accessto the hijras due to her status as a middle/upper class Indian woman. Her status made it difficult to find the hijra's location as people around her found it 'improper' to socialise with hijras (4). Locating hijras was also difficult due to the general public's ignorance of them and apprehension about discussing hijras from those who were aware of their existence in Hyderabad. Despite this, Reddy managed to gain access to a group of hijras living under a water tank in Secunderabad, whom she formed close bonds by positioning herself as a curious, unthreatening student.

By starting the book at the beginning of her fieldwork and highlighting initial issues, Reddy gives an insight into the life and work of an anthropologist, showing the hard work and determination that was put into acquiring the information for her book. As well as introducing the hijras of Hyderabad and beginning the narrative of her fieldwork, Reddy uses this first chapter to introduce her main argument surrounding the identity of hijras. Hijra identity cannot be solely reduced to their gender or sexuality but is a combination of various factors which she explores in future chapters. This leads the reader to question their own perception of what makes up identity and question the works of anthropologists which focus primarily on sexual performativity as a marker of identity.

Theoretical frames and literature in Chapter 2

While chapter 1 focuses on introducing Reddy's argument and highlighting the practicality of conducting fieldwork among the hijras of South India, the second chapter unpacks the existing theory that analysis of hijra identity stems from xamining secondary literature. She condenses this theory into four categories of literature which construct the idea of a 'third sex'": ancient Indian texts, medieval references, British colonial literature and contemporary anthropological literature (18). Within each branch of literature, she finds evidence of 'third sex' and speculations on concepts of sexuality within India. Reddy shows that these go back as far as ancient Indian times, with different religions such as Jains, Buddhists and Brahmans having their own way of differentiating gender such as procreative ability (21). By analysing and comparing medieval literature she introduces the historical presence and importance of eunuchs in India and the high positions that they often had due to their social difference as castrated men and lack of sexual ability deeming them unthreatening. The use of eunuch to describe hijras implies that the basis of their identity is their lack of genitals, a view that Reddy challenges within this chapter and throughout the book. She uses literature from these four eras to demonstrate the ways in which hijras have been situated in the realm of sexuality and gender difference by scholars and anthropologists and questions hijra's' role in being a symbol of the third sex. Drawing comparisons across texts, she shows that the reality of hijras constructing their identity through many social differences other than sexuality is commonly overlooked.

Kotis in Chapter 3

After examining the methodology and theory behind studying hijras, Reddy moves onto discussing the beliefs of the community, introducing an array of concepts and linguistic terms which establish their entire social order. Reddy discusses the terms *koti, pantis*, *AC/DC* and *nanans*, all of which are identifying labels which show that hijra is not a blanket term for men who live as women. Reddy defines *koti* as '"receptive, effeminate men'", meaning that they do not penetrate during sexual intercourse, whereas *pantis* are '"penetrative, masculine men'" who do penetrate (44). This focuses on their roles within sex, showing that while Reddy argues that sexual performativity is not the only factor in hijra identity, it is still a factor for some. By discussing these terms, Reddy displays the blurred lines of gender and the complex construction of identity, challenging the idea that there are only three genders. Furthermore, religion also plays a role in hijra identity, as while hijras are one type of *koti*, their Islamic faith is one of the key factors in making them hijra-*kotis* rather than an alternative type such as *jogins* who are Hindu. *Jogins* believe that they were born as kotis, unlike hijras, as they were possessed by the goddess Yellamma at birth (71). Another type of koti are the kada-catla kotis who by a hijra's definition are '"kings by day, and queens by night'" (67), meaning that they are men who live as men during the day and as women at night. By providing clear descriptions of various types of *koti* within the 'koti-family', Reddy shows that hijras have more identifying features than their sexual role. While the term 'hijra' is the most well-known and stigmatised across India, they are not the personification of third sex but simply one of many communities who identify as neither male nor female.

Furthermore, in chapter 3 Reddy once again demonstrates difficulties that she faced with gaining access to different *koti* communities. While her focus was on hijras, in order to explore their relationship with other *kotis* it would have been beneficial to interact with other *kotis* and pantis too. However, she found this difficult as some koti groups such as *Jogins* only coame together for pilgrimages and special occasions. Another large issue in talking to *pantis* was her loyalty towards the hijras. This made it morally difficult to approach them considering the common '"emotional polarisation of the koti-panti relationship'" (49). This makes the book vastly one sided, from only the hijra point of view. Nevertheless, this does not invalidate the opinion of the hijras and does not make the book any less engaging.

The role of asexuality in hijra authenticity in Chapter 4

In chapter 4, Reddy engages with the idea of the 'real hijra', contemplating hijra authenticity by exploring asexuality and views surrounding sex work. Asexuality is seen by hijra's as the most important feature in hijra 'authenticity' with '"sexual impotence'" being a necessary criterion to be a hijra (92). This is ensured by the performance of the "nirvana", an operation to remove male genitalia, which serves as proof of their asexuality Those who have had the nirvana are seen to be authentic

hijras and as such have and gain more izzat (respect) from other hijras. Reddy highlights a key paradox within the system of hijra authenticity and izzat as it is believed that those who have had the nirvan gain more respect, while simultaneously the operation results in the lossof izzat in theeyesof thegeneral public due to the stigma associatedwith the label and practicesof hijras(96). By pointing out this issue, Reddy emphasisesthe struggles that hijras face as they are discriminated against for becoming the most respectful version of themselves.

Reddy also discusses the presence of sex work within the lives of hijras which is frowned upon by other kotis. The lack of izzat associated with the work often resulted in hijras lying to her or going to extremelengthsto fabricatestoriesto cover up their participation in prostitution. This madeit difficult at times for Reddyto gain an accurate account on hijra occupations. However, I would argue that this act itself shows the belief systemsof hijras and the importance of maintaining the illusion of having izzat to others aswell astheir shame of unauthenticity.

Blurring of religious and gender boundaries in Chapter 5

As mentioned above,the role of religion is important in the identity of hijras. Reddy elaborates on this further in chapter 5 where she discusses hijras' claims to Muslim identity despite the construction of their history through Hindu mythology. Hijras' personal views of religion are similar to their viewson genderin that they blur religious boundariesWhile hijras are Muslim, and Reddy wasoften told about Islam being a necessaryelement of hijra identity, they also incorporate elementsof Hinduism into their identity. For example, hijras worship the Hindu goddessBedhraj Mata and believe that they need her permission to become hijras and to have thenirvan operationor theywill die(109). This blurring of religious boundaries is mirrored by the blurring of genderin that hijras' practice a combination of male and female Islamic customs and rituals. For example, many hijras take part in the male pilgrimage Hajj and enter mosques wearing maleclothing. However, they also partakein femalepracticessuch aswearing a burqa (104). By exploring the religion of hijras, Reddy showsthe complexity of their identity.

In chapter 5 Reddyalsocommentsdirectly on other anthropologist's' methodologies andtheories,challengingtheir frameworks by highlighting their emphasison hijras as social outcasts rather than studying how their Islamic faith relates to their identity. Reddy suggests the possibility that in previous studies hijras articulated their identity in terms of their location outsideof thegeneral religiousboundaries of society due to pointed questioning by the fieldworker rather than elaborating on their own constructed combination of religion. As a result, ethnographic studies overlooked herole of Islam and Hinduism in hijra's' lives (117-118) and instead focused on their social differences from the general public. Reddy's engagement with anthropologists Lynton, Rajan and Jaffrey adds an extra layer to her analysis and addresses a potential issue in the misrepresentationof hijras in literature.

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Performativity in Chapter 6

As previously mentioned, hijras believe in hijra authenticity, an elementof which is linked to appearance. Those who appear more feminine, while not being a requirement , gain more respect (124). Hijras are required to rid themselves of masculine qualities. Reddy discusses in detail the various processeshijras go through to make their appearancemore feminine such as facial hair removal and taking excessiveamountsof birth control pills for their female hormones (130). However, despite attempts to eradicate male attributes, hijras do not identify as women but instead, as previously mentioned, blur the line of male and female. Reddy makes this clear when she states, "'Whenever I askeda question regarding their gender affiliation, hijras would laugh and say,"We areneither men nor women; we are hijras"' (134).

Chapter 6 also discussesthe importance of performativity in shaping gender and hijra identity. Hijras can be clearly identified in public in India by the classic hijra handclap, which is used solely by hijras to gain attention, express annoyance, shame others or simply to express themselves. Reddy explains the hand-clapping element of hijra identity through a writing style in which she differentiates between "scene 1…scene 2…" to clearly show different times in which she experienced handclapping (130). This is an interesting and engaging format asit allows the readerto clearly see that handclapping is a common aspect of hijra life by showing the various times throughout her fieldwork that Reddy encounteredit. It is formatting styleslike this which makes Reddy's book expert-level as she combines various writing styles, swapping between informative discussion to narrated stories, to clearly explain concepts and keep the reader engaged.

In terms of performativity, while handclapping is a key feature of hijra practice, it is not the only identifying element. Reddy highlights the practice

of revealing their genitalia to the public in order to shame them (139). Being a conservative country, the showing of genitals in India is largely frowned upon. However, hijra showing their lack of or mutilated genitals is seen to be a large mark of shame and as such is a weapon of sorts that hijras can use against the public. Reddy emphasisesthis clearly by including excerpts from instances that hijras have lifted their saris towards people bothering them, showing the power that the nirvan operation can give a hijra, despite simultaneously reducing their social status. I find Reddy's analysis here particularly noteworthy as she emphasises the many paradoxes that exist in hijra life and highlightsthe stigma surrounding hijrasas they are unaccepted by wider society.

Personal hijra accounts in Chapter 8

Further on in the book, Reddy includes a fascinating chapter compiling stories from kotis that she met during her fieldwork. This chapter is particularly interesting, and my favourite chapter, becauseit allows the reader to dive into the life stories of hijras in their own words. Reddy includes these deeply personal accounts to show the similarities and reality of the strugglesthat many hijrasfacein their lifetime. However, the reliability of the stories is somewhat questionable since many hijras tended to fabricate aspects of their background to relate to other hijras. Furthermore, there is an issue with documentation as the stories are written with great detail. Reddy would have had to remember these accounts so that she could write them up, thereby questioning how she accurately documented the information. However, he may have recorded these interviews, making it possible to write up the full accounts. These accounts detail the abuse and abandonment that many hijras faced as well as the impact that being a social outcast and vastly stigmatised can have on their mental health with accounts of suicide attempts being uncommon. This chapter is vastly emotional and works extremely well placed near the end of the book as the reader has already gained an insight into the practices of hijras and now hasthe opportunity to read about the emotional toll that it can have.

With Respect to Sex: negotiating hijra identity in South India. Conclusion

Other important factors that Reddy discusses within *With Respect to Sex: negotiating hijra identity in South India* that make up hijra identity are kinship, marriage, family and gay identifications. In her conclusion, Reddy emphasises the importance of studying and understanding hijras by discussing the political advancementsfor hijras in the 21st century as they gain more rights and recast themselves as respectable individuals, separatedfrom the shameful image that society created. This is the perfect ending as it highlights the book's modernity and the increasing importance of educating the public on hijra identity. Reddy effectively brings the topics from all of her chapters together to form her final argument; that hijra identity is not solely defined by sexuality or gender but is understood through a vast range of differences, including religion, class, customs, sexuality, gender and beliefs. She discusses how each element links to this overarching argument and makes her point extremely clear. Furthermore, she also engages directly with another anthropologist, Serena Nanda, quoting her directly and contradicting Nanda's statement that hijra's are "neither men nor women" by stating that hijras actually adopt a *combination* of male and female traits.

In conclusion, Gayatri Reddy'sethnograph *With Respect to Sex: negotiating hijra identity in South India* is an informative, emotional and masterly book which educates the reader clearly on hijra identity and unpacksthecomplexity of this identity. each chapter details an aspect of identification that other anthropologist's' claims that hijra identity is solely sexual. By allocating eachchapter aspecific factor of hijra identity the book is easyto read and digest. This is emphasised further by clear subtitles and Reddy reinforcing her argument throughout the book. Interestingly, Reddy engages directly with the work of other anthropologists, critiquing their analysisandproviding her own spin on their theories, making the book a perfect exampleof the continuous progression of social anthropology. A slight flaw in the book is that Reddy at times overquotes other anthropologists, including large quotations rather than summarising their views. However, this is a minor flaw as she balances outside sources with her own analysis and theories. Therefore, I would argue that this book is an excellent example of a modern ethnography which engageswith the progressionof the world around it.

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Review of Fear and Fortune

By Natalie Wong Jiayi

Introduction

Mette High's *Fear and Fortune* is an anthropological text which explores how Mongolians in Uyanga adapt to and navigate the artisanal mining (ninja mining) as a viable and preferred way of life to herding. Fraught with issues of pollution (as a social ordering concept) and morality, ninja mining and gold money carries with it great risk of misfortune. With an extended fieldwork spanning two-and-a-half years, High unpacks how the cosmoeconomy of the Mongolian gold rush in Uyanga challenges conventional ideas of economics, exchange, money, and morality.

Instead of employing the 'moral economies' approach, High draws on da Col's (2012) work on cosmoeconomy to analyse the intricate intertwining of humans and nonhumans in the gold rush. Instead of focusing on distilling universal concepts, High acknowledges and focuses on the plethora of diverse views within the community to exemplify its 'thick' and multiple understandings. The book is also concerned with issues of money and exchange, in particular the divergence from conventional understandings of the functions of money and static conceptions of exchange. While economic understanding of the functions of money rely on the stability of money as a currency for exchange and its reification of a certain value, High contends that these assumptions cannot be straightforwardly transposed onto gold and gold money in Uyanga. Conventional exchange logics emphasise the agency of the bearer of money/valued-object and sees money as a means to an end. High pushes back against this dyadic framework and encourages readers to see money as an agent in itself, capable of shaping and changing the nature of social relations. High explores these themes in a multi-sited ethnography in Uyanga, Mongolia, where she stayed with various host families and lamas.

Methods and Challenges

During her fieldwork, High faced numerous challenges from the following factors: (A) ninja mining was considered illegal at the time of the fieldwork, (B) High was considered a foreigner by those she was not well acquainted with, and (C) the constant threat of *altny gai* ('misfortune of gold'). This meant that she could only rely on conversations and could not employ the help of a research assistant. Furthermore, the fear of accidentally transferring the *altny gai* to her host families or experiencing the misfortune herself meant she had to be extra cautious and she 'never went to the mines unaccompanied' (15). While it was challenging to record data and conversations while working in the mines or with the herding families, High soon relied on memorising sentences in Mongolian, which allowed her to focus on the nuances and deeper meanings in conversations. Her ethnographic evidence hence comprised daily conversations, accounts and reflections from participant observation.

High's positionality as an outsider meant that she could not conduct formal data collection without raising suspicions about possible links with the local authorities, and this also limited her access to encounters which involved external parties who were extremely cautious of the authorities (see Chapter Six). While this may seem rather limiting, High's book is still a well-stitched together patchwork of carefully curated ethnographic encounters, peppered with anthropological theory and comparisons, and historical background for building context. While the historical background and rich ethnographic detail and vignettes help to immerse the reader in the scene, at times the chapters could have benefitted from a more in-depth exploration of themes raised or anthropological analysis. Examples of this will be raised as appropriate in the review of the individual chapters.

Structure and Chapters of the Book

The structure of the book traces the multiple and diverging paths of gold from the point of extraction in the mines to its transformation into gold money and other material investments. The involvement of other actors such as the *altny chanj* (unregistered petty gold traders), nonhuman spirits, shopkeepers, lamas, and *tom darga* ('big boss') are fleshed out in the various chapters to fully explain the moral implications and practices that surround the storage, transfer, and use of the money associated with ninja mining.

The first two chapters (*The Burden of Patriarchy* and *The Power of Gold*) set the context of the hardships endured by the community and present both push and pull factors that draw and keep the ninja miners working at the mines. Chapter Three (*Angered Spirits*) delves into the presence of nonhuman spirits and the dangers surrounding ninja mining, as well as the importance of the concept of cosmoeconomy to understand these complex relations between humans and nonhumans. The final three chapters (*Polluted Money, Wealth and Devotion, and Trading Gold*) focus on the tensions between wealth and morality, and pollution and risk, arising from the extraction of gold and gold money. These three chapters also uncover the methods employed to navigate the risk and moral dilemmas by various agents.

Setting the Context and Discovering Motivations

The first chapter, *The Burden of Patriarchy*, touches on the push factors of rigid patriarchal structures within the social ordering of nomadic pastoral life in Uyanga that motivate people to turn to ninja mining as a viable alternative way of life. The second chapter, *The Power of Gold*, delves into the spiritual world and engages the concept of cosmoeconomy to explain the coexistence (albeit not a peaceful one) of humans and nonhumans. The chapter explains the pull factor of the gold dust that has a hold over the miners, luring them to (and continue) working in the mines.

The first chapter opens with a rich vignette describing the frustrations and suppressed anger felt within one of High's

host families as a result of the stifling patriarchal kinship structure. However, High does not approach the issues surrounding this vertical kinship structure immediately. She describes the historical background of the mining industry in the region and the events at the turn of the millennial to explain the emergence of informal gold miners (*ninjas*) who started their own artisanal mining operations. Following this description, High explains a push factor of the prolonged extreme weather events of the *udaan zud* that resulted in huge losses in livestock. While poverty pushed some households to ninja mining, High also notes that some wealthy families became ninjas and develops the point of stifling hierarchy mentioned in the introductory vignette to the chapter. The various contributing factors of (A) virilocal marriages and the subordinate liminal position of the daughter-in-law in the family, (B) hypogamy and (C) agnatic kin ties result in tensions and suppressed anger that makes living in such households almost dreadful. Decisions are made almost exclusively by the head of the household hich contributes to the frustrations within the *ail*.

The chapter could have benefitted from a clearer structure, placing the theoretical discussion of the kinship structure after the ethnographic detailing. Furthermore, while peripheral reasons and context-setting background information is not unimportant, the chapter could have benefited from a deeper theoretical exploration of the kinship structures. For example, it would have been beneficial to include an ethnographic description or images for readers to visualise the spatial organisation of the gers which are produced by and reproduce the hierarchical kinship structures.

The second chapter focuses on the pull factor that lures and keeps ninjas working in the mines. Instead of developing the concept of cosmoeconomy fully in this chapter, High enters a detailed explanation of the social organisation among ninja miners. High describes the social ordering within mining communities as based not on kinship or patriarchal hierarchies, but on the ability and skill of individuals. While this is a useful comparison to the previous chapter's analysis of the social organisation among herders, it could have been better placed in the previous chapter to add analytical depth and detail. High describes *altny chadvar* (power of gold) as an invisible, strong and centripetal force pulling people to continue working as ninja miners and also as a force capable of inflicting harm and misfortune. Where a development of the concept of cosmoeconomy could have been beneficial, the analysis instead turns to developing Strathern's arguments about moral standards of actions that were guided by nonhumans, and altny chadvar as a temporal marker. The preoccupation with developing ethnographic and historical detail for background context diverts attention away from what could have been a richer theoretical analysis and insight into *altny chadvar* and the agency of nonhuman spirits or the issues surrounding morality as hinted by the inclusion of Strathern's argument.

Complex Relations Between Humans and Nonhumans (Cosmoeconomy)

The third chapter focuses on the plurality of agents – human and nonhuman – central to the Mongolian gold rush. In *Angered Spirits*, High discusses the dangers surrounding ninja mining arising from the risk of misfortune from transgressing taboos and disrespecting spirits. High illustrates the precarious mutual existence of and relationship between humans and nonhumans that has to be continuously maintained by rituals, respecting taboos, and following certain practices of *hishig*. *Hishig* is an example of the multiple and at times incongruent understandings and interpretations within the community. *Hishig* can be used to describe the abundance of resources, the 'process of hunting and the game [hunters] kill' (67), 'health of household members' (68), and methods of cultivating and keeping fortune within the ail. *Hishig* supports and underpins the social ordering of kinships structures, and promotes harmony and cooperation within the household.

While High compares such practices within predominantly herding households to that of ninjas, who '[marginalise the] largely benevolent white lus' (73) and focus on appeasing the black *lus* (landscape spirit), the chapter could have benefited from a stronger link between the different practices of navigating the cosmoeconomy. With fortune and the risk of misfortune intimately tied to the appropriate management of relations with nonhumans, High could have provided deeper insight into related anthropological themes of human-nonhuman relations and the cosmoeconomy. However, credit is due here when High reiterates the need to appreciate local understandings in their own right – judging their ontological grounding against that of conventional or 'universal' principles is akin to denying locals their intellectual agency. Economic life can be seen as a manifestation of human and nonhuman interaction, relying on careful nurturing of relations with spirit beings; accumulation of wealth and resources, and health and vitality can be understood as tied to local understandings and cosmology.

Navigating Moral Hazards and Risk of Misfortune

The final three chapters form an important section on the ways in which different people navigate the dangers and misfortune that comes with ninja mining and gold money.

Chapter Four (*Polluted Money*) explores why and how gold money is differentiated from the national currency, Tögrög, and how different people navigate the 'weight' it carries from pollution. High alludes to various anthropological theories of money, wealth and morality to show how wealth and (polluted) money are more than abstract symbols or objects used in exchange, but rather objects that have strong links to the spirit world and emotions of jealousy. High contrasts the issues of wealth faced by the herding community with the experiences of those who come into contact with the polluted gold money. Herders and ninjas prefer to transform their existing wealth or gold into money and material objects to prevent potential *hel am* attacks or the

misfortune of gold money.

Firstly, the ability to generate wealth is predicated not solely on skill, but also on the ability to sustain peaceful relations with spirits and to managethe ail well. The wealth and prosperity from herding has to be quickly converted to other physical means such that the household will not be at risk of potential *hel am* attacks. For example, by '[converting] their milk into unknown amounts of concealable money, their wealth thereby evades easy quantification, rendering *hel am* attacks more difficult' (83). While High relates this to kinship structures and management of the household, she quickly diverts to an descriptive historical account of the Tögrög, which adds little analytical value to the overall discussion.

Secondly, High unpacks the concept of pollution after mentioning it briefly in previous chapters. This explanation may have been better positioned earlier in the book for the benefit of readers who may not have background knowledge of pollution as a social ordering principle. Providing ethnographic detail about the transgression of the polluting boundaries in ninja communities, High explains how such immoral behaviour results in misfortune that can be transferred to gold money. To prevent the potential misfortune, those in possession of gold money ritually cleanse it or spend it on non-durable items, such as vodka, to prevent the permanence of pollution in the household. Shopkeepers also prioritise the circulation of the gold money to prevent pollution and stagnation of their unsold stock. Shopkeepers constantly reassess the value of the Tögrög based on its physical condition which is perceived as linked to the degree of pollution and misfortune. Hence, High cautions against analysing such behaviour using capitalist notions of profit without understanding local moral considerations. It was interesting to read how different shopkeepers employ various methods of managing the polluted money, reiterating the point on individualised moral understandings.

Chapter Five (*Wealth and Devotion*) further expands on the methods that various parties engage to navigate the risk of misfortune and the 'weight' of pollution of gold money. Instead of focusing on circulation, this chapter focuses on appeasing the spirits involved. The mining community turns to local Buddhist lamas for appeasement rituals and to 'relieve the physical pain they experience from [mining]' (99). Another moral and ethical dimension emerges in this chapter, with lamas facing dilemmas on whether to carry out appeasement rituals. By carrying out appeasement rituals, they can be seen to legitimise the practices of the mining community which causes suffering to spirits and the environment, and is antithetical to Buddhist understandings and goals. However, nonaction would prove to be more dangerous to disregard the anger and suffering of the spirits. Lamas assume that ninjas continue mining because of their lack of respect for spirits and request for appeasement rituals to maximise their economic yield. However, ninjas see mining as the only viable alternative to herding, and they request for appeasement rituals precisely because they acknowledge these spirits. The disjuncture of views within the local community reveals the incongruence of understandings of cosmology. It would have been interesting to note if there was any mediation of the opposing perceptions between both parties. High also notes the inversion of understandings of polluted money when contrasted with the lay people. While the community is mainly concerned with *hel am* and misfortune that the accumulation of wealth, and pollution brought about by gold money, respectively risks, the lamas are more concerned with respecting money as a material object, utilising it for the upkeep of the monastery. High could have expanded more on the comparison between these divergent views in order to give a more definitive structure and wider-picture analysis of the community.

In the final chapter, High expands on ow polluted gold money can be renewed to become profitable and reduce the misfortune it carries. While she emphasises that local understandings of economy and profit cannot be judged based on conventional theories, she does not develop the concepts of asymmetry or thresholds fully. The chapter focuses on the *tom darga*, the 'big boss' (112) of *altny chanj*, who sets the gold exchange rate among the gold traders and trades gold with Chinese to renew gold money through the yuan, which is seen as more profitable than Tögrög, heavy with the pollution of gold money. High also includes ethnographic evidence of the differentiation between dead and profitable money, emphasising that physical contact with a vessel of fortune was crucial to ensure continued prosperity. Here, the method of managing the pollution of gold money relies on business acumen and economic risk management to renew money's origins. While this chapter shows the path of gold extending beyond national boundaries, High does not develop the chapter in this manner. As the 'illegal trade was already a priority for the police', High's presence as a foreigner could potentially increase the risks further (119). Hence, this limited her access to exchange and negotiation processes between the *tom darga* and Chinese traders.

Therefore, instead of focusing on the external path of gold, High expanded on the distaste among the local community of the Chinese yuan, where 'some felt it was rubbish (*hog*)' (123). Regardless of whether the money was renewed, being able to trace the money back to the extraction of gold meant it was still polluted and hence undesirable. Linking this to the overall structure of the book which follows the path of gold and gold money, while intersections of pathways occur where broader perceptions converge, there are still divergences among local understandings of morality, cosmology, pollution and risk.

Conclusion

Fear and Fortune provides valuable insight and ethnographic detail that vividly portrays how the community in Uyanga has adapted to ninja mining as an alternative way of life. Through the introductory vignettes to each chapter and the themes discussed, the book sheds light on the complexities, dilemmas and moral implications that come with the extraction of gold and gold money. Issues

of morality, economy, pollution, mutual reliance and coexistence with spirits result in various methods of navigating risk and fear through different roles. The book traces the path of gold, exchanged through various actors, to portray the multiple axes of actors and localised understandings of cosmoeconomy and morality.

At times the book could have benefitted from more in-depth theoretical analysis and exploration of sub-themes instead of its heavy use of ethnographic detailing and background information. Furthermore, instead of elaborating one historical detail, including secondary information mentioned in the introduction from sharing notes with her interlocutors would have made for a richer and more nuanced analysis. While High did not explicitly state her positionality nor reflect on her experience as both a female and an outsider in patriarchal households, she does include ethnographic encounters with females of the household who felt repressed under the oppressive hierarchical structures. Reflections on her positionality as a female and an outsider could have added analytical depth to the contrast between the herding community's vertical hierarchy to that of the mining community which is gender-blind and focuses instead on individuals' ability.

For a multi-sited ethnography spanning an extended period of time and the complexity of the themes explored, the book could have benefited from a more robust conclusion to tie together the interconnected concepts and ethnographic material. As noted in the book's conclusion, *Fear and Fortune* can be used as a springboard for research in other related areas. For example, the anthropology of money, environment, or mineral extraction. The book can also serve as part of a wider selection of research material for area studies on the Mongolian region, and has the potential to include in-depth research into the livelihood of households engaged in different work. Overall, the book challenges the reader to go beyond conventional ways of thinking to understand complex ways of living that acknowledge the agency of nonhumans to navigate the risk and fear that comes with fortune.

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Examining concepts of reflexivity and positionality in native and indigenous research methods

By Elizabeth Volaris

Introduction

Keywords: reflexivity, positionality, research ethics, anthropology

The progression of anthropology as a discipline has long been recorded as having a mutually reinforcing relationship with colonial discourses of power (see particularly Lewis 1973, Pels 1997). This has created a multitude of power dynamics which infiltrate research methods on both micro and macro levels. Thus, reflexivity and positionality have emerged as two crucial elements of the ethnographic process in order to allow for a critical examination of these power dynamics. This essay will use Foucault's (1970) definition of these concepts, which states that we need to recognise that our knowledge is 'controlled by certain inherent rules that grants privileges and marginalises other knowledges' (Foucault in Bartilet 2014: 1). By utilising this we can begin to understand the problematization and complexity of conducting native anthropology or "anthropology at home" and how this transforms the concept of reflexivity (Jackson 1987:245). Inquiring into the formation and relevance of these concepts does, therefore, require us to fully examine their multifaceted and mutually constitutive nature. It could be argued that native anthropologies are always going to hold deeply entrenched biases which inevitably cloud the objectivity of the research. This would, however, ignore the nuances of native anthropology which can grant access to information which might otherwise be unavailable. A stronger argument, therefore, is that native and indigenous anthropologies must be conceptualised as broad – including anthropologists native to specific cultures rather than to a monolithic whole. Using this as a starting point allows for an examination of the ways in which both positionality and methodology impact on the conduct of fieldwork. This will be done by first examining the impact which personal conditions have on development and reflexivity before looking at both the micro and macro elements of the methodologies which emerge from this and finally its problematization.

Understanding the impact of personal experience on reflexivity in native anthropology

The problematization of native anthropology stems from the entrenched colonial binary of 'the observer' and 'the observed' which perpetuates the polarisation of 'native' and 'real' anthropologists (Ryang 2006). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) emphasises how growing up within an indigenous community, there was no clear distinction between stories about research and stories about colonization, as the relationship between the two is historically mutually reinforcing. Moreover, she suggests that the detrimental power in research was not in the imposition of researchers within communities but was in the worthlessness of the research to 'the indigenous world' as it 'told [them] things already known… suggested things that would not work and made careers for people who already had jobs' (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 3). These conditions are, therefore, perhaps where a reconsideration of native anthropology can bridge the gap and begin to repair both damage and forced relationships forged by colonial binaries.

This reconsideration of native anthropology requires us to view 'each anthropologist in terms of shifting identification amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations' (Narayan in Ryang 2006: 144). Moreover, it requires us to actively distance ourselves from colonial perceptions and appreciate the contributions which can be made through the shifting identities of semi-native or native anthropologists. Mahmood (2005) fits into the category of the former. Growing up in Pakistan in the midst of the Islamic revival movement, she made the conscious decision to conduct her fieldwork in Egypt as this would allow the intellectual and political 'dislocations' she deemed necessary in order to fully commit to understanding and representing communities through her ethnography (Mahmood 2005: 24). This placed her in a unique position as an ethnographer as she had a deep, personal understanding of the cultural complexities which underpin Islamic society without intimate knowledge of Egyptian society itself, thus, creating both the potential for a close relationship with her respondents whilst simultaneously leaving an open space for independent construction of their narratives. If we revisit Foucault's definition of reflexivity and positionality as being 'controlled by certain inherent rules that grants privileges and marginalises other knowledges' (Foucault in Bartilet 2014:1) we can see that through utilising her status as a (semi)native anthropologist she is able to contort those privileges and knowledges to benefit both her ethnography and the portrayal of the women within her research.

Similarly, Abu-Lughod conducted her research on Bedu communities in Egypt, utilising her Palestinian-American background (2008). She asserts that being from the Middle East and Arabic-speaking allowed a relationship of trust to be forged, specifically with the women in these communities. Being able to maintain and perform both sides of her identity was 'both important in determining what [she] sought to do in [her] writing and crucial to them in their acceptance of [her]' (Abu-Lughod 2008: 39). However, she also notes that it is because they hold her to the standards of someone indigenous to Arab culture that she began to see a divergence on certain values (Ibid). This demonstrates that by engaging reflexively with her dual positionality she was better able to conduct research. Moreover, both of these ethnographies demonstrate the fluid and shifting nature of personal identities and their impact on the field.

Research Methods which emerged from (semi)native anthropology

The status of (semi)native anthropologists can be seen to open a new avenue of ethnographic investigation. Both of the ethnographies above demonstrate the ways in which having an understanding of the values of a society can help one to create trust within communities. When looking explicitly at the methods used by both Mahmood (2005) and Abu-Lughod (2008), it becomes evident that whilst Mahmood uses her indigenous knowledge to ground her interviews and understandings, they are also heavily supplemented by other information and theories which she had gathered. Abu-Lughod, on the other hand, places the focus specifically on the interviews allowing them their own space and to be free standing (2005, 2008).

> "With many a sense of the limitations of the standard anthropological monograph, however sophisticated, sensitive or well written, and wondered if there could be a style of ethnographic writing that would better capture the qualities of "life as lived" in this community"
>
> (Abu-Lughod 2008: 2)

Abu-Lughod's positionality within these communities is key as it is within her role as a (semi)native ethnographer that she is able to see past the, predominantly western, cultural biases and binaries and move to create something which centres the respondents. The importance of using and appreciating knowledge, which can only be formed in the margins of society, cannot be understated as it is this which adds both dimension and depth to an otherwise singular discipline (Hooks 1984). Additionally, her fluency in Arabic allows her full control over both fluid conduction of interviews and translation which conveys exactly what was trying to be said. Her direct transposition of recorded stories and narratives in their entirety is a kind of solution to what Narayan (2003) refers to as 'hybridity'; as it enhances the experiences of respondents and places their narrative with equal importance to the analysis (Ibid). Abu-Lughod's presentation of research is, as she admits herself, 'unusual' (2008: 1). Upon her first stay in the Awlad 'Ali Bedouin community in the 1970s, she asserts that she did not feel comfortable recording and, therefore, wrote her first book from scribbled notes spanning a large number of notebooks (Ibid). Whilst these notes were satisfactory for the writing of a book focusing on social life and gender relations, Abu-Lughod draws a dichotomy between the academic and scholarly accomplishment of this book and her desire to properly convey the richness and complexities of the lived experiences of people within this community. Thus, she returned in consequent years and describes it as sharing:

She qualifies her defence of this type of ethnography with explanation that despite the narrative tone, it still involves both analysis and the need for an awareness that the stories told are still shaped by her questions and the point of view which was taken (Ibid). It is in this way that both her status as a (semi)native anthropologist and a woman come into play as we see self-contained narratives of Bedu women being framed by the analysis and thought of another woman from a similar ethnic background. By using directly quoted interviews, one can attempt to avoid the ever-present pitfalls in feminist anthropology, the universalisation of the experiences of women accompanied by false essentialism and cultural blindness (Ibid). Moreover, this diversification of knowledge detracts completely from the idea of ethnographers belonging to a single monolithic entity. We can further see from this that there is a strong consideration of reflexivity within her work which pushes her to better consider and use her positionality.

As previously suggested, Mahmood's (2005) ethnography still seeks to utilise her position as a (semi)native anthropologist but in strikingly different ways than Abu-Lughod. In the case of Mahmood, it is far more nuanced and comes with the fluidity of her writing, which can be attributed to the lack of obvious bias or strained relationships due to her being an 'outsider'. Her use of 'person centred ethnography' coupled with her cultural knowledge creates a valuable example of representation of 'the complex interrelationships between individuals and their social material and symbolic contexts' (Levy & Hollan 2015: 297). This is exhibited through the ways in which she conducts her interviews, with the interviewee being treated as a respondent as opposed to an informant (Levy & Hollan 2015). Coupled with the space which she gives in her writing - as seen through paragraphs on uninterrupted interview transcription - this allows for a unique perspective. One particular example of this is in the chapter 'Topography of the Piety Movement' as a paragraph of transcription is followed by the phrase 'Noting the look of puzzlement on my face, Fatma asked, "Have you spent the month of Ramadan in Cairo?" I nodded yes. Fatma continued: "So you know what happens during Ramadan in Cairo..."' (Mahmood 2015: 49). This is demonstrative of the ways in which Mahmood uses nuanced body language and communication to not talk over and dominate the interview but to push forward and tease out more information. This subtlety also proves her present knowledge of her positionality and how to utilise, tailor and adapt it to conversations with different informants. The combination of her status as a (semi) native anthropologist and the interview techniques she chooses to employ therefore allows her a particular path into her ethnography which aims to grant agency to those she is interviewing.

Although I have laid out here the importance of the differences found between Mahmood (2015) and Abu-Lughod (2008) in order to emphasise the diverse and multifaceted nature of native anthropology, there is one overarching similarity: their advanced knowledge of the language of Arabic which allows them a further freedom of movement within their interviews. Mahmood (2015) dedicates a small section at the beginning of The Politics of Piety to the nature of her transcription and the ways in which she sought to stay as true to the original meaning as possible. In order to do this, she notes numerous systems which were used in translation. The most prominent example states that 'in order to make the transcription of Modern Standard Arabic

words and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic words as consistent as possible, while still conveying the flavor of Egyptian colloquial speech I have adapted the Badawi and Hinds system to that of IMJS' (Mahmood 2015: 39). Thus, we see that the fluidity which accompanies (semi)native anthropology does not stop after the research has been completed but continues through the entire process. This is not to say that the ability to speak an indigenous language is limited to (semi)native anthropologists by any means, however there is an advantage to being native to a language as this allows one to hear subtleties which may otherwise be missed.

Problematization of identity and bias in native anthropology

In order to fully understand the concepts of reflexivity and positionality we must also acknowledge the limitations which native anthropology faces. To do this, we will depart from the focus on the works of Mahmood (2005) and Abu-Lughod (2008) and use Kubic's (2016) native ethnography of Poland. Given the context in which this essay has been situated, it is paramount to acknowledge that the situation in Central and Eastern Europe, whilst unique, does not harbour the same colonial legacies (Kubic 2016). Thus, this aspect of this essay does not seek to transpose this theory onto the wider concepts of native anthropology but rather use this as a singular example and opportunity for analysis.

Kubic argues that there are two primary problems within native anthropology. Firstly, the problem of bias emerges as one has an innate drive to present their own community in a certain light, which can cloud the way in which research is carried out (Ibid). Interestingly, far from arguing against this bias, Kubic (2016) suggests that one should assume the role of defending their community against hegemonic misunderstandings and representations, however, this should not obstruct critical dialogues concerning their community. It could be argued that there are limitations to this, as the onus placed on the ethnographer cannot be monitored or checked, however it does allow for correction of historical injustices. Secondly, whilst there are many advantages to sharing cultural values with those involved in one's ethnography, there are also corresponding problems. Kubic recalls her interviewees assuming her knowledge on topics she was asking about, as she shared their language (2016). Here we see the potential for homogenisation of culture and knowledge by informants/ respondents, perhaps leading to the omittance of key information. Moreover, this problem is furthered as native anthropologists are often held to higher standards than their peers. Kubic demonstrates this as she recalls a criticism of her book from a cultural activist who stated, 'I must admit that this book left me very disappointed. I believe that the formulation of Polishness in this work is extremely unfair' (2016: 91). Thus, this demonstrates the ways in which the sense of belonging and community one brings to their anthropology may similarly bring criticism and a sense of betrayal. When considering this in the context of research methods it may require more effort on the part of the ethnographer to ensure their respondent is aware of the aim of the ethnography and the wider, non-native, audience it is intending to impact. There may be an ironic subversion here, in which native ethnography requires people to be addressed more as informants rather than respondents in order to mediate these issues.

Conclusion

The conceptualisation of native and indigenous anthropology must be broad, including anthropologists native to parts of a culture rather than a monolithic whole. This allows for further critical analysis with considering the multiple positionalities situated within the axis of identity being key to the reflective conducting of fieldwork. Being a (semi) native anthropologist allows one a unique perspective in which they can both resist colonial and racial bias and afford space to their respondents to speak for themselves. Kubic's (2016) ethnography further allows us to appreciate and contextualise this, whilst simultaneously analysing the duality of the benefits and fallacies of complete native anthropology. Thus, research methods are constantly changing and evolving much like conceptions of both anthropology and the anthropologist. In the context of this dynamism, finding the right research method therefore has never been more crucial.

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Student Use of Facebook Messenger in St Andrews: Cultural Symbolism, Language and Image

By Kristen Castro

I am sitting in my flat's lounge, at the large table across from two of my flat mates. The sunshine gleams in and out through the clouds and our large bay windows, reflecting off our computer screens as Ella stands up to close the drapes. This is a familiar scene in my flat: a few of us gathered around the wooden table that has become our designated shared space to do coursework whilst engaging each other socially every now and then. Julia begins to talk about how she needs to message someone about an upcoming event that she been promoting, and then complains at their response to her message with a "heart react".

Julia: *"I don't understand, why is he heart reacting this message? I'm just asking about extra tickets and it doesn't make sense. Why doesn't he just like it?" (Julia shows table her phone), "Look!"*
Ella: *"Yeah, I don't get that either, maybe he just wanted to respond quickly or mis-reacted?"*
Julia: *"Ugh, it's confusing when someone uses reacts in, like, the non-assumed way."*

This brief exchange displays the presence and existence of media ideologies and Messenger "react" etiquette. In St Andrews, the use of "reacts " has developed into a specific phenomenon and culture. "React" etiquette will be further analysed in this ethnography in the frame of media ideologies, culture, and assumed perceptions of its use. Beyond the local realm of St Andrews social media and communication applications have become an integrated part of the contemporary Western world. Constant online presence and contact have become essential, and my informants reported that a person is expected to always be accessible through online platforms and apps. This development and expansion of online and virtual worlds have led the anthropological pursuit into the digital realm. Dalsgard (2016) remarks, in consideration of Boyd (2006), Gershon (2010) and Miller (2011), that "'Scholars theorising about social media have convincingly argued that online sites are by now so integrated into many people's everyday lives that it makes little sense to maintain a clear-cut distinction between online and offline"' (Dalsgard, 2016: 96). The presence of online sites and virtual worlds in people's everyday lives and combining virtual and offline worlds is thereby essential to digital anthropologists. Significant attention has been drawn towards Facebook and its realm of kinship and social interactions through online profiles and presences. n other words, "'Facebook is to most users 'simply' a part of their lives, which sets a specific framework for interaction through the means of communication embedded in the template (chat and messages;posting

on walls …)"(Dalsgard, 2016: 98). In this way, Facebook has become an integral part of everyday interactions and is a source of social and cultural information for an individual or group. With that being said, not much research has been conducted on Facebook Messenger, the complimentary instant messaging platform. Messenger was launched in August of 2011 as an add-on, yet separate platform that allowed one to one communication to groups and friends (Zhang, 2011), and Messenger reactions or more commonly known as "reacts" was launched in March of 2017 and so comprises a relatively recent phenomenon (Moxon, 2017).

Methodology

I conducted my fieldwork through a combination of participant observation in group chats, in-person group interviews and group and individual interviews conducted online over Facebook Messenger itself. I used my existing social connections and inclusion in various group chats to investigate the use of reacts within Messenger. My in-person interviews usually began as conversations surrounding messages people received and expanded into a consideration of personal use of reacts. Participant observation was conducted mostly by examining conversations in a social group chat of the University Trampoline and Gymnastics Club, which includeds twenty-nine members at the time of research. I further used my flat group chat to evaluate the usage of reacts and possible semantics behind them. My online interviews were much more scripted and direct, as I asked for permission to interview and had to prompt responses by direct questions on personal usage and beliefs about reacts. The use of participant observation, combined with directed interviews has thus allowed for, a more holistic approach to the use of "reacts".

Why Messenger?

Personal communication platforms have continuously grown and expanded across the globe. The adoption of these new communication technologies does not follow a linear sequence, as different countries uptake different communication channels following different routes (Broadbent, 2012: 127). Through my observations, it was apparent that Facebook Messenger had become an essential form of communication among students at St Andrews. As St Andrews is a highly international community, Messenger allows for easy communication as it only requires a Facebook account and internet connection to operate, rather than dealing with the effort of obtaining someone's actual phone number and encountering possible barriers that result from international phone courier charges. To message someone on Facebook, you either need to be friends with them , or they must accept your message request. This entails that pre-existing relationships typically need to exist in order to comfortably communicate with someone ver Messenger. In this way, Messenger lies within the previous social structures of Facebook and is a further expansion into the personal and individual online world. One of my flat mates remarked that "'I never use Facebook Messenger at home[USA], or I'll use it to talk to people from Uni. When I'm here, Messenger is my primary form of communication.'" It is evident that this easily accessible platform has garnered appeal among St Andrews students, becoming an essential part of the social and cultural life of St Andrews. The use of reacts drew my immediate interest when considering the specific culture and social interactions on Messenger. Similar to emojis, reacts are described by Facebook as: 'the ability to react to an individual message with a specific emotion, quickly showing acknowledgement or expressing how you feel in a lightweight way. For example, if someone messages a photo of their cute pet, you could respond with the love reaction' (Moxon, 2017). I have found that reacts are omnipresent in Messenger chats in my personal usage and observations. They have become a completely distinct way to communicate and are used in a way that interplays with text communication. Below is an image of the possible reacts to images or messages sent within Messenger, to provide context and visual aid:
From left to right, each one is typically referred to as a "'heart react'", "'laugh react'",

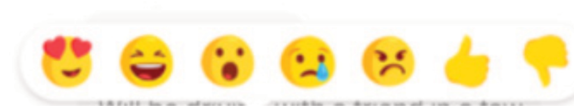

Figure A: Image of "reacts" options

"'wow react'", "'sad react'", "'thumbs up'" or "'like'", and "'thumbs down'" or "'down react'". by students within St Andrews. The last symbol, dislike, is rarely ever used The "reacts" are described within their emotional context as they are often used in this frame. "Reacts" are similar to emojis in their appearance, and Danesi (2017) notes that "'emoji writing allows for an easy way to add emotional tones, from happiness and laughter, to irony and critique, to messages". Reacts may appear similar to emojis yet their usage is completely different, as they are only used to react to one specific message. Emojis can be sent along with text or alone, while reacts are only able to be used to comment/respond on a sent image or message. Ilana Gershon reasons that "'just as people's ideas about language and how language functions shape the ways they speak, people's ideas about different communicative media and how different media function shape the ways they use these media (2010: 290). Media ideologies are culturally specific, and the perceived intended function of reacts is crucial to consider within this frame, as they are a relatively new method of communication and interaction. "The ways in which reacts" operate in specific cultural and media forms will now be investigated in their sense within student culture in St Andrews.

Student Use of "Reacts"

The correct way to use a "react" continues to be debated. With some slight prompting, I realized during a conversation with my flatmate that I had come across the scenario I was looking for (excerpt on page 74). Ella's response to her use of an angry "react" displays the layers of sarcasm and humour that can be entangled within to a single "react." The "reacts" are facial expressions that exist to convey one's reaction to a message or image. Similar to the emoji in that they can convey basic emotions, reacts can seem like a further

So, what is the assumed way for "reacts"?

Ella: *ponders for a second and says: '"Well, I'm not gonna use a dislike react because it's not the same as a sad or angry react. I wouldn't use a react to actually express an emotion. The down react is actually more of an emotion and actually angry, comparatively to the angry react.'."*

Julia: *"Yeah, a down react is much more harsh."*

Then what would you use and angry "react" for?

Ella: *"If it was someone roasting me, so if I was [air quotes] 'angry' but not actually angry. I find that it's used more in group chats." (roasting is equivalent to teasing or playful insult in most scenarios).*

function that communicates feelings of sadness, anger, or happiness. However, Ella's consideration that she would never use a react to actually suggest her actual emotions implies a wider and more complex social meaning behind "reacts". So then, how should "reacts" be defined? As an image? As a cultural symbol? Or even as its own language? "Reacts" are versatile in their usages and reflect the individual's notions and intentions while contributing to the culture established within the circle of their usage. A "react" may even, to an extent, fall into all three categories. The image is a product of a given medium, yet is also a product of ourselves, '"for we generate images of our own (dreams, imaginings, personal perceptions) that we play out against the other images in the visual world".'(Belting, 2011:2). The "react" is most definitely a product of "ourselves," as the given image of the "react" is taken and often ascribed more meaning than is assumed. In a group interview I conducted on Messenger, I began:

In this interaction, it was once again agreed upon that a thumbs up or thumbs down "react" is assumed as being more serious and straight-forward, yet sad and angry "reacts" often causes some confusion.

Facial "reacts" are much more debated in their meaning, yet there is still a base cultural assumption surrounding their use. Angry "reacts" as being '"silly'," or for comedic use, is often assumed among student use of Messenger, and yet if used in a different cultural setting may upset someone or not be interpreted in the '"correct"' intended way. However, a thumbs up is straight forward and much more serious: "Reacts, in this sense," exist as images that often straddle the boundary between mental and physical existence (Belting, 2011:2). Belting goes further

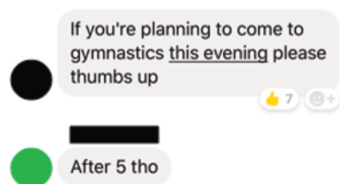

Figure B: Thumbs up use in Trampoline group chat

In what capacity do you think the use of 'reacts' is showing what you're actually meaning to say?

Sophie: *'hmm... think it depends on the react, like a thumbs up or thumbs down is quite good at showing what I'm actually meaning to say cause it's just a yeah cool thanks or no I don't like... but then I use angry reacts as a joke?'*

Iona: *'Yeah, like it's hard to tell whether people are being sarcastic through them or not. T e others seem to be used more seriously.'*

Gavin: *'I use the sad react to be sad more often than I use it to be silly... I would be more serious with my reacts if there were more applicable ones.'*

to note that images '"are produced and transmitted by the media current in their own times. The interplay between image and technology, old and new, constitutes a symbolic act. The response, the audience's perception of the image, is also a symbolic act" (2011:15). "Reacts therefore" exist as a symbolic act through their existence as an image and assigned value.

"Reacts" are furthermore most often used in group chats. Miller states that '"Facebook is a virtual place where you discover who you are by seeing a visible objectification of yourself" (2011:179)..' This visual objectification of yourself is continued or transferred from Facebook into the use of Messenger, especially in group chats, where use of "reacts" makes one's presence known yet not obnoxious. Student group chat use usually exists as social use, flat group chat use, or for more '"professional"' committee or society use. My flat group chat is a mix of serious toned things about emailing our agency and fixing flat problems as well as operating as a social chat. A few weeks ago, the flat Wi-Fi was not working, and so this discussion ensued in the group chat:

In this case, the sad "reacts" are being used to express feelings of annoyance and sadness at the fact that the Wi-Fi was not

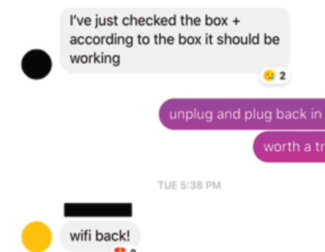

Figure C: Flat group chat "react" use

working, and when the box indicates that it is fine happy emotion is expressed, without any use of words. No one replies that they are upset by this, but this is automatically assumed in the sad "react" response. This automatic cultural assumption, to some extent, can classify the usage of "reacts" as a language. Language acts as a cultural function and is considered a '"purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols"' (Sapir, 1970:8). It should be noted, however, that the only possible symbols to use within "reacts" are not voluntarily produced but given as an option. This has led to a culture within St Andrews of assigning voluntary meaning to "reacts", in an attempt to create a common and intelligible language. In this way, "reacts" act as symbols with intrinsic meaning. Although seven simple "reacts" hardly composes the true complexities and possibilities of a full language, "reacts" act within the frame of language and transmit cultural and semantic value. Therefore, I would like to recognize "reacts" as containing elements of language, as a sort of *quasi-language* not yet recognizable as a completely constructed language. It should be further noted that language cannot exist apart from culture (Sapir, 1970:207). Language and culture act independently yet give each other meaning and value within society. Essential to the word "culture " is the idea of values revered as normative action (Miller, 2011:186). There is an expectation that users should already be aware of various codes of language as the structure of Facebook creates normativity (Miller, 2011:186). Messenger is thus a

separateyet fundamental aspectof current Facebook use. It cannot be completely separatedfrom the original or "'public'" Facebook, as Messenger was born from it and has brought previously established cultural normativity while establishing new norms. "Reacts" have therefore becomea cultural icon themselves:
The use of "'saddest of reacts'" implies the symbolism and media assumptions behind "reacts",while signifying its further

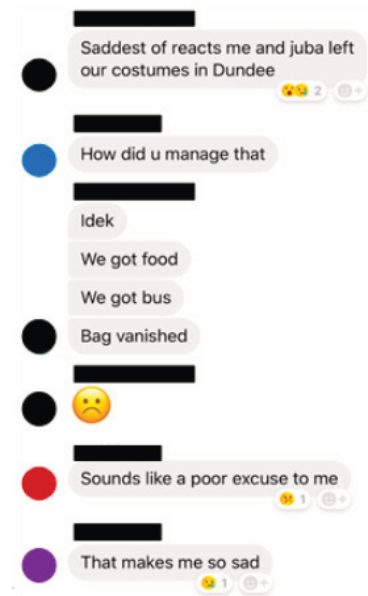

Figure D: Trampoline group chat use of "reacts"

developmentandevolvementinto acultural symbol. This alsoimplies a bleeding of the online world into offline language, and within St Andrews, I have heard "'saddest of reacts'" or "'sad reactsonly'" usedin face to faceconversation. The useof an "angry" react when someone is joking and as a responseto the joke is also present. The cultural assumption of a sad "react" and its reference within a group setting to communicate a specific meaning separate from simply stating an emotion signifies the complexity of "reacts " as cultural symbols and as a quasi-language. It is noted that "'the most astonishing feature of digital culture is not this speed of technical innovation but rather the speed by which society takes all of these for granted and createsnormative conditions for their use'" (Miller and Horst, 2012: 28). The speed of this normativity is reflected in the quick uptake of "reacts" as cultural symbols, an expansion of their original purpose. "Reacts" exist as an image, a cultural symbol and in the frame of language. Their interpretations and semanticsare not universal, yet there is an assumedcultural and symbolic value assignedto "reacts" within their student usein St Andrews.

It should be recognized that this ethnography is limited in its scope and has only involved members within my own social circle and those with whom I have personal relations. There may be differences with "react" use within students at St Andrews. This study is also only focused on students and their formation of the culture around "reacts", and it cannot be applied to a larger group. My own preconceived notions of normativity surrounding the usage of "reacts" should also berecognized asI am a member of the group I studied, and my preconceived notions may have affected outsider'swould not. However, my already accessible relations and "'native-ness'" can also be seen as beneficial to already situating me within the social circles who make reacts and messengera part of their daily interactions at StAndrews.

Conclusion

Digital anthropology has grown as a sub-discipline within social anthropology, and has been recognized that our online and digital life reveals much about the cultural and social self, and that "'digital anthropology will be insightful to the degree that it reveals the mediated and framed nature of the non-digital world'" (Miller and Horst, 2012). The mediated and framed natureof thenon-digital world is revealedin the normativity and culture establishedin the digital world. The useof FacebookMessenger"reacts" indicates the rapid development of media and online culture through communication and social platforms. "Reacts" contain cultural assumptionsof meaningthat isnot directly obvious, creating the "react" as a cultural symbol and form of language or "quasi-language". Their use in group chats is particularly relevant as group chats reveal their assumedculture and assigned value in a group or collective setting. "Reacts" are crucial to the understanding of digital culture and how it forms. Facebook reactions were only releasedtwo yearsago. The intricate cultural meanings behind them that haveevelopedsorapidly attempt at staying relevant within a constantly changingand emerging digital world. It is suggestedby Miller and Horst (2011) that the key to digital anthropology, and even possibly to the future of anthropology itself, is the study of how things become rapidly mundane. The constant reveal and development of new social digital platforms allows the constant cultural development and cultural re-evaluation within these updated platforms or opens the possibility of switching to new ones, and creating new cultures by comparison, as seen in Gershon (2011). "Reacts" have thus manifestedinto cultural symbolsand actantsof languagein their useby students in St Andrews. The possibilities of social anthropology to further examine "react" use globally or to consider the reactions presentin theextremely popular iMessage, leaves consideration and investigation of reaction use within communication platforms with an incredibly large potential.

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The Social Life in a 19th Century Engraved Drawing of St Salvator's Chapel in St Andrews: an Object Biography

By Xiantian Ma

During the summer vacation of 2020, I bought a 19th-century engraved drawing from an online used-bookstore in Beijing depicting St Salvator's Chapel in St Andrews. After researching the artist, I found it was originally a book page detached from The Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland written and illustrated by Robert. W. Billings (1845). As a Chinese student studying at the University of St Andrews, I was very excited to have it in my collection, for it has traveled from the UK to China and resembles my own experience of being an international member of the community. Soon, I became exceptionally curious about this print's histories as well as the social contexts it carries: what happened to the social relations that the object represents when its meanings are accumulated and shifted over its century-long life? With this question in mind, I decided to write an object biography for this print and discover its evolving social meanings with reference to social anthropology's material culture studies developed by Hoskin (2006: 74).

The making of the engraved drawing's biography involves several steps. To begin, I will set the methodological and theoretical framework of understanding objects in the considerations of their social life. In terms of the method, anthropologists often consider an object as having a social life. Thus, we can generate its biography to highlight its change in space, time, and movement as a form of ethnographic approach revealing its transformations in social relations (Kopytoff, 1986). Furthermore, the social features of and the meanings developed during an object's transformation are also discussed through different theoretical debates (Appadurai 1986; Gosden & Marshall 1999; Edwards & Hart 2004). Taking from methodological and theoretical context, I will then delve deeper into the print's biography through three stages of its life cycle: 1) speculating stories before it ended up in the bookstore through an exploration of changes in its materiality; 2) stories when it was commodified for sale and my purchase of it as a form of exchange; and 3) my performance of giving new meanings to it after it came into my ownership. Conclusively, I will argue that the transformations in the social life of an object, such as the print, do not need to be in a 'single form' during every stage, but a process in multiple ways of transformations during its life cycle that includes accumulating meanings through its materiality, shifting meanings under commodity exchanges, and acquiring new meanings from performances.

Figure 1. photograph of the engraved drawing of St Salvator's Chapel, St Andrews, Scotland. 2020

Object Biography and the Social Life of Things: Method and Theory

When we(re)act upon objects, they become reflections of our life. Hence, studying objects is also a study of social relations as we constantly "think through things" (Henareet al. 2006).Taking thisviewpoint, anthropologists have surveyed objects not only in terms of their appearance and attributes, but also experiences and ways they have engaged within society such as gift, commodity, possession, or performative action (Mauss 1924; Appadurai 1988; Jhala 2006; Gosden & Marshall 1999). With this understanding, objects are not a lifeless material presence that isalienated from peoplebut aretreated ashaving a "social life" that can be studied like a personthrough people'sinteractions with it (Appadurai 1986). Therefore, just like a person, an object can have its own biography that gives us insight to its social meanings.

The concept of an object's biography in the anthropological study was firstly proposed by Kopytoff (1986: 66-67), who suggeststhat we cannot merely understand things at one point of their existencebut should focus on different stagesof their life cycle. Therefore, the point of an object biography is to highlight stagesin its life by focusing on changes led by human interactions, such as material attributes, movement, or time (Hoskin 2006: 74). Through looking at theose changes, we can understand the transformations in its social meanings which the object carries throughout its lifetime. As a result, object biographies becomes an ethnographic method of understanding society through showcasing material things. Ultimately, while recognizing objects have their own social life, the implication of 'biography' becomes a method that focuses on temporal changes to understand transformations in socially imbued meaning.

Under the biographic method, there are many debatesaround what kind of social transformation an object experiences in their social life. Firstly, through analyzing exchangesof goods, Appadurai (1986: 13) suggests that objects can move between gifts and commodity; the transformation in the meaning of things is therefore reflected in the difference of exchange activity. However, Appadurai's (1986) argument has been critiqued by Gosden & Marshall (1999: 174), who suggests that things do not need to be exchanged in order to gain meanings. Instead, they take the exampleof First Nation masksin the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada, where masks only possess meaning through ceremonial performances. Gosden & Marshall (1999: 175) therefore argue that meanings can also be acquired from objectsin the contextof performing them. Lastly, Edwards& Hart (2004) focus on how a photograph's meanings can be accumulated through its materiality. Edwards & Hart (2004: 3-6) argue that when examining things such as photographs, we should not only focus on their content as a "two-dimensional object", but also on people's engagement to thephotographs' materiality asa "three-dimensional object". We can therefore trace a photograph's social life through accumulations in its materiality such as

signatures, stamps, folds, or scratches, and understand their embedded social contexts. In summary, while Appadurai (1986) and Gosden & Marshall (1999) look at the social life of objects in terms of their shifted meanings and *how* meanings can be acquired, Edwards & Hart (2004) explore *when* an object's social meanings are accumulated.

Relating the methodological and theoretical framework back to my own argument, I will take my approach to the print in line with the analyses above. In relation to the method, I recognize that the print has its own social life and apply biographic analysis ethnographically, illustrating its changes in the three stages. I will then apply the theoretical debates, relating the arguments from Appadurai (1986), Gosden & Marshall (1999), and Edwards & Hart (2004) during each stage and illustrate transformations in the engraving's social meanings. Finally, I suggest when considering transformations of the engraving's social life, object biography becomes a process of combining changes in meaning through social exchange, performance, and materiality, to understand the object's cumulative meaning.

Stage One: Early Stories of the Engraved Drawing

The first stage of the print's biography reveals stories before it ended up in the bookstore. Since this stage spans the majority of the engraving's life, much of its history has either been lost or blurred. I can only trace this part of the story from speculations of its signatures and material features. According to the signatures, it was drawn by R.W. Billings and engraved by J. Godfrey. Billings was a 19th-century British architect focused on illustrations of cathedrals and churches. This drawing depicting St Salvator's Chapel was initially an engraved image in Billings's book, *The baronial and ecclesiastical antiquities of Scotland*, published in Edinburgh during 1845. Furthermore, material features are also important for tracing its past. Firstly, one edge of the engraved drawing is gilded, which is a common feature of books during the Victorian era (Zaehnsdorf 2007: 57). It suggests that the engraved drawing was indeed a book page from the original book and was somehow detached from the book to become an independent piece. Secondly, one of the most notable features of its materiality is on the back, where the drawing was stamped by a mark stating "Public Library, City of Lincoln". It suggests that before ended up in the used-book store, the drawing was once a collection from the library in Lincoln, England. In summary, the early story of the engraved drawing started as a book page when it was published in Edinburgh in 1845. It was then detached from the book at some point and was stamped when it became the collection of Lincoln city's public library. Lastly, it traveled across the world for unknown reasons and ultimately ended up in an online used-book store located in Beijing and became a merchandise to be sold.

The demonstration of the engraved drawing's early story is closely related to the argument proposed by Edwards & Hart (2004), who suggest meanings of photographs can be accumulated through tracing their materiality. Although Edwards & Hart focus on photographs instead of drawings, the implications of the print is still similar in terms of its being a "three-dimensional object" (2004: 3). Linking the theory with the print, I was able to not only focus on the content, but also trace many of its added meanings by looking at its materiality and the social identities which they reflect. The signature indicates the artist who produced this drawing, while the feature of the gilded edge and the stamp informs us that it was detached from the book and was once kept in Lincoln's public library before it came to the bookstore. The social transformations within this part of the object biography are therefore a process of accumulating meanings through changes in the print's materiality by considering it as a three-dimensional object rather than simply looking at its two-dimensional content.

Stage Two: A Commodity in Exchange

The second stage of the engraved drawing's biography focuses on its status as a commodity in the store and my purchase of it. After the engraved drawing arrived at the used bookstore in Beijing, it was commodified and labeled for sale on its website. The bookstore's discourse for the print described in Chinese:

> Unquestionably, the Victorian age was the most glorious period during British History for it reached Britain's peak status through industrial revolutions and imperialism. The British arts during this period also bloomed with many art-masters gaining prestige around the world. In the meanwhile, the development of the publishing industry also motivated those masters to participate in the production of engraved drawings.

Figure 2. Photograph of the stamp at the back of the engraved drawing. 2020

Under the portrayal from the store, the engraved drawing of St Salvator's Chapel was treated as an antique object that resonated with so-called "Victorian Glory". It is therefore a commodity to be sold as a witness of this particular period of British history. However, when I discovered the engraved drawing, I never related to it through the seller's discourse around its Victorian context but instead related the drawing's content with my own experience as a student who repeatedly visits the University Chapel depicted. Through looking at the Chapel's image, a sense of intimacy and memory arose. On the one hand, it presents the building and

place where I have joined as a member of its community; on the other hand, the drawing also traveled across the world from Scotland to China, just as it resembles my own journey traveling from China to Scotland and becoming an international student studying far away from my home. This sense of personal attachments to the object's content ultimately motivated me to buy it.

The second stage of the print's social life describes how the bookstore and myself considered the object's meaning differently. It can be closely linked to the argument proposed by Appadurai (1986), who suggests while the commodities are being exchanged, their social status is also shifted. On the one hand, the commodity status of the engraved drawing in the bookstore was intended to be an antique served as a presentation and appreciation of the Victorian period. On the other hand, the value for me as a buyer is its depiction of a site of personal attachment. Therefore, my purchase of the engraved drawing becomes an example of commodity exchange that shifts the object's status from a historic antique into something related to personal feeling. As a result, the social transformation at in the second stage of the print's social life becomes the process of shifting meanings during exchanges of the object as commodity.

Stage Three: A showcase to be Framed

Lastly, the third stage of the engraved drawing's biography tells stories after it comes into my ownership. When I purchased and received the engraved drawing from the used-bookstore, I initially kept it on my living room's bookshelf. Later, I questioned to myself: if the engraved drawing is merely held inside the shelf and no one is able to view it, could it loses its special meaning as a representation of my memory and attachment to the university? Finally, I decided to make it a memorial object, carefully putting it in a photo frame and placing it at the entrance of my home, thus demonstrating my identity as a student at the University of St. Andrews. When my family, friends, or myself are entering my home, it becomes the first object we encounter. Through viewing its content, I can either share the stories of my university life to others or recall memories with it on my own. Therefore, after framing the engraved drawing and placing it at the entrance, it becomes an exhibition linking the content to my own identity as a member of the University. Today, this engraved drawing is still framed and placed at the entrance to my home, it greets my family and myself every time we return and tells stories of my journey living and studying at the special place in Scotland across the world from my home.

The third stage of the engraved drawing's social life can be linked to the argument posed by Gosden & Marshall (1999), who suggest things can also acquire meanings through performative activities. In the context of the print's biography, the performance is demonstrated through framing and placing it at the entrance of my home. As I put the engraved drawing in a frame, I embodied the meaning of showcasing my own identity in connection to the University. Furthermore, when I placed it in the entrance of my home, it became a way of exhibiting my identity as a St. Andrews student at the forefront of my domestic space. As a result, the framing and placement of the engraved drawing can be regarded as a form of performative action that imposes my identity onto the object. The transformation of the print's social life in the third stage is therefore obtained when its meanings are acquired in performance.

Conclusion: Three Stages, One Social Life

By looking at the three stages of the print's biography, I have analyzed how transformations of meanings during each stage are represented from different theoretical perspectives. In summary, the transformations of an object's social life from the three theoretical debates are presented in the respective forms of accumulation, shift, and acquirement. Although three of the stages represent different forms of transformation, they are all rooted within one object's social life. Therefore, in my argument of the biography, I suggest the transformations of meanings within one object's social life does not need to be in a singular form but can be understood as multiple forms of transformations presented at different stages that can be arranged into a cohesive life-cycle.

Figure 3. Photograph of the engraved drawing framed at the entrance of my home. 2020

Throughout this essay, I have argued that the engraved drawing's transformations of social meanings within different stages of its life is not necessarily singular but can be multiple forms. I have firstly outlined the method and different theoretical debates related to the object's social life and the focus of transformations in social meanings when making an object biography. Applying theories suggested by Edwards & Hart (2004), Appadurai (1986), and Gosden & Marshall (1999), I discuss the engraving and its biography in ethnographic terms. In the first stage, I relate arguments from Edwards & Harts (2004) and suggest the print's early history can be traced as an accumulation of meanings from its materiality. During the second stage, I have linked Appadurai's (1986) argument and illustrated how commodity exchanges between the bookstore and myself shifts the meaning of the print's value. The third stage of the engraved drawing's social life can be correlated to the argument from Gosden & Marshall (1999), where my activity of framing and placing the engraved drawing at the entrance to my home becomes a performance that acquire meanings for it. Among the three stages of the object

biography, I have suggested that although each stage represents different ways of transformation, they are all rooted from one social life within the print. Therefore, the social life of objects like this print are not limited to one 'way' of changing, but fluidly evolve meaning, value, and form over the course of their lives.

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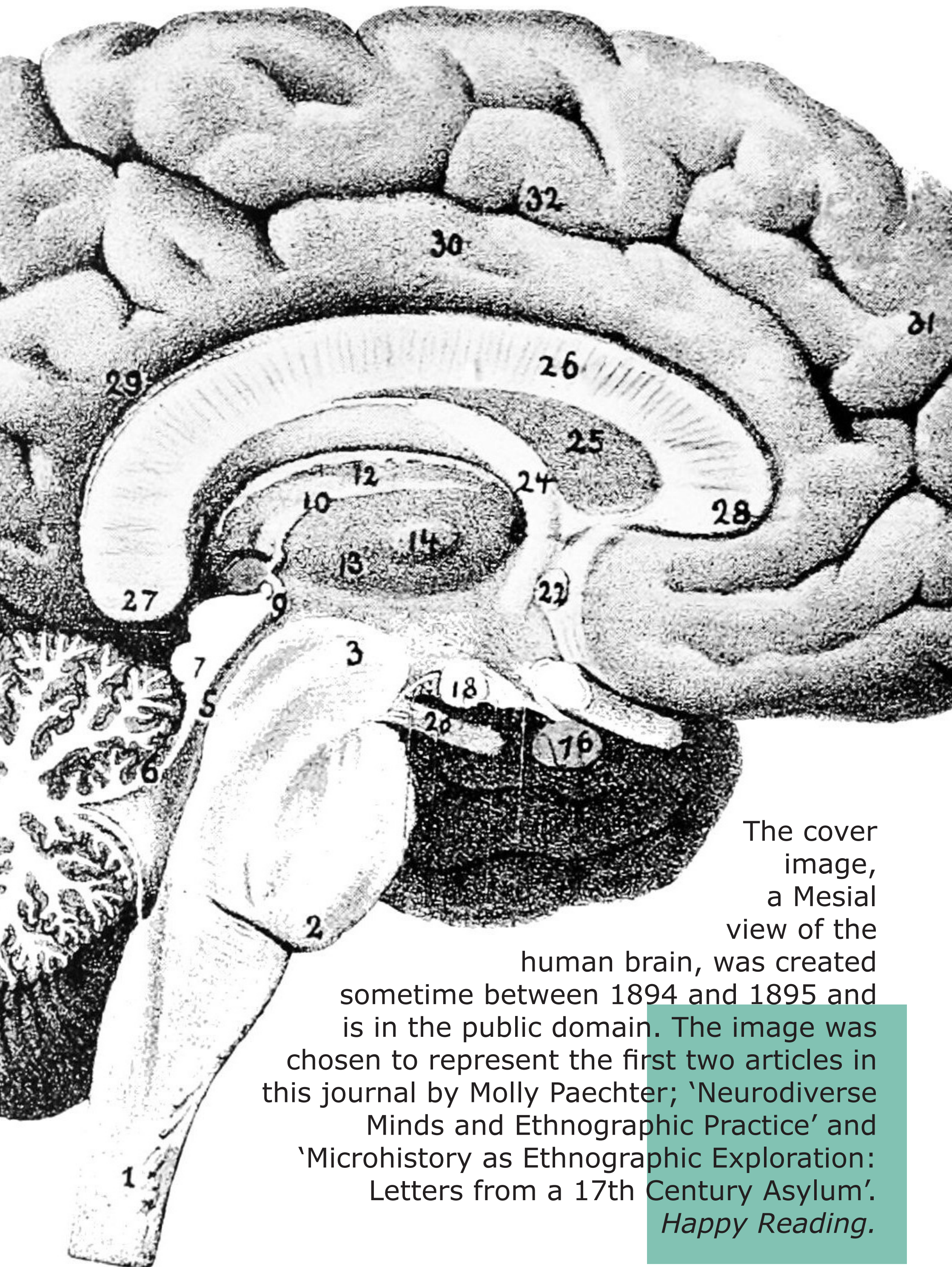

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