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FIFTY YEARS OF *JASO*

With this issue, *JASO* celebrates fifty years since Brian Street and Paul Heelas edited and produced the first issue of the Journal back in 1970. Unfortunately, although it is fifty years since the first issue was published, we cannot actually claim fifty continuous years of production, given the gap between 2000, the year of our last physical print issue, and *JASO*'s revival as a web-only publication, called *JASO* Online or *JASOo*, in 2009. Nonetheless any half-century milestone is a significant one, and our very own Golden Jubilee deserves at least this brief notice.

JASO's origins at this distance of fifty years are now somewhat obscure in terms of whose idea it was, but the journal started as a sub-committee of the Oxford University Anthropological Society, under the auspices of Edwin Ardener, a lecturer in what was then the Institute of Social Anthropology. He was making his name at the time by pioneering critical reflections on Lévi-Straussian structuralism from a perspective which was equally structuralist in its way. The very first article, by Paul Heelas, in asking 'Meaning for whom', queried the ethnographic relevance of classic structuralism and led on to a whole rash of papers and books on what became known as semantic anthropology, though there were other currents as well, such as Marxism and gender. Although Edwin had the title of Editorial Adviser and held the purse strings, a 'senior member' being a requirement of the Proctors' rules for university clubs, he desisted from exercising any editorial control, leaving it to the editors to make the decisions and produce the journal, initially printed on a stencil machine and collated by hand.¹ In the first few years the editors changed frequently, but in 1979 more stability was introduced with the appointment of Jonathan Webber, who introduced a properly printed journal and kept a firm hold on the finances. Steven Seidenberg and Jeremy Coote also became long-term members of the editorial team over this second period, though others were involved more intermittently. I myself joined in 1983 and have been involved ever since. This greater stability of staffing meant that *JASO* eventually ceased to be edited by students, as the post-1979 team all eventually found jobs of one sort or another, though the student-run tradition was maintained to some extent, as it still is, by recruiting students as reviews editors, an area of activity that was relatively easy to demarcate.²

Around 2000, however, for no very obvious reason, we (now without Seidenberg) found ourselves running out of steam and decided to end the Journal's first period of existence, without any idea of reviving it at a later date. Then in 2009 myself and a new editor, David Zeitlyn, at the latter's suggestion, decided to relaunch the Journal as an online venture available as a free download rather than by paid subscription, as formerly. It also involved much less administration and secretarial work than formerly, as well as becoming virtually cost-free, as it no longer had to be printed and dispatched to all the corners of the globe.

JASO is now in the twelfth year of its rebirth. This current issue has the usual mix of articles and reviews, partly written by students, both in Oxford and elsewhere, and partly by post-doctoral, salaried colleagues. (Sadly this issue also includes an obituary of 'Nick' Allen, a longstanding and popular member of the School's staff who died in March this year.) Long may *JASO* continue to provide a forum for publication to those who are starting out on their publishing careers – always one of the justifications for its existence – as much as to those who are already established in the field.

Robert Parkin

¹ For Edwin's own account of *JASO*'s first decade, see Edwin Ardener, 'Ten years of *JASO*: 1970-1980', *JASO* 11/2 (1980), 124-31.

² A full list of the editors and reviews editors involved up to that time can be found on the cover of the last printed issue, Vol. 31 issue 3 (2000).

NICHOLAS JUSTIN ‘NICK’ ALLEN (1939-2020)



JASO is extremely saddened to have to report the death of Nicholas Justin Allen, or ‘Nick’ as he was known to his friends, colleagues and generations of students, on 21 March 2020. Nick was a constant supporter of the journal, to which he entrusted some of his most important papers.

I first met Nick when I arrived at 51 Banbury Road in the autumn of 1976 to study for the Diploma in Social Anthropology. This was also Nick’s first year as a lecturer in what was then a quite modest size Institute of Social Anthropology compared to what its successor, the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, has become. In fact, I went there out of hours, and it was Nick who opened the door to me. I can’t now remember the rest of the meeting, but I clearly came away knowing that Nick was to be my tutor or ‘supervisor’ for the first year, which turned into many more years as I undertook a doctorate in anthropology under his supervision, and in a sense it never ended.

Nick provided an account of his own intellectual career for the journal *Ethnos* in 2003.¹ In it recalls his descent from British army officers and other officials in India and the interest of his father, by profession a civil servant, in Celtic numismatics and the British Academy, of which his father served as both Secretary and Treasurer. Nick traced his interest in research primarily to his father, but it was his mother who gave him his enthusiasm for mountains and for climbing them, which later influenced his decision to do fieldwork in Nepal. He then goes on to describe his schooling, initially in Hong Kong because of his father’s posting there, but continued upon his return to the UK at Rugby, which, like public schools everywhere at that time, seemed to the outsider both eccentric and unorganized in its teaching, but also potentially invigorating to those who knew how to take advantage of what it could offer. This

¹ ‘From mountains to mythologies’, *Ethnos* 68/2 (2003), pp. 271-84.

gave Nick a classical background which at the time was of little interest to him. More immediately it led to some rather fitful medical training, partly at Oxford, that left him quite ambivalent about a medical career, which ultimately he was to reject as not for him. He then discovered a book on the multi-disciplinary Torres Straits Expedition of 1898, which had included experts in anthropology as well as more established disciplines and which gave his life a new direction. This discovery was made at the house of his maternal uncle, father of the late anthropologist Alfred Gell, who was therefore – and appropriately, given Nick's later interest in kinship – his mother's brother's son. Nick then returned to Oxford to do the same diploma I later took with him as his tutee, and he also joined the newly founded Linacre College, where he met his later wife Sheila.

Nick's supervisor for both the diploma and the initial stages of his doctorate, which followed, was Rodney Needham, from whom he later distanced himself while retaining a lot of Needham's intellectual influence. Partly for organizational reasons largely to do with Needham's absences abroad, even before the decisive break Nick had drifted away from him to obtain some supervision from Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf at SOAS and ended up finishing his doctoral thesis more or less on his own. While waiting to go to the field he visited Paris, where he met Louis Dumont and the Nepal specialist Sandy Macdonald, who also had a considerable intellectual influence on him, as well as attending lectures by Georges Dumézil, who had an even greater impact on his own later research. Then came fieldwork, which among other things confirmed Nick's growing interest in language and his increasing preference for diachronic over synchronic approaches to the social. This led later to an affinity with Marcel Mauss's ideas about world history, but at this point in time it was concentrated on another emerging interest, the anthropology of kinship from the point of view of terminological and other systemic change.

After returning from the field, getting married, finishing his doctorate and briefly working as a lecturer in Durham, Nick joined the Oxford staff in 1976, only to be caught up in internal conflicts surrounding Needham, who had been appointed to the Oxford chair in anthropology and became head of department the same year (also, as it happened, my own first year in the Institute). This is not the place to go into these conflicts, but they eventually led to Needham removing himself to his college, All Souls, during his first year in the professorship, after which he never set foot in the Institute again. This led to the management of the Institute being put into commission, with a rotating headship at which Nick took his turn, until John Davis took over the Oxford chair in 1990. 1976 was obviously a challenging and difficult year all round, trapping Nick, a new and somewhat under-confident lecturer,

between his old supervisor and those staff members, all senior to him, who had issues with Needham.² This led to Nick decisively distancing himself from the latter, as already mentioned, less because he knew on which side his bread was buttered than because he shared the distaste of many of his new colleagues for the way Needham was allegedly acting. Certainly the whole experience left him scarred for a long time afterwards.

However, things settled down in the Institute after Needham's departure, and Nick was able to carve out a place for himself in both teaching and research. Both ended up being very extensive: in addition to his tutorial teaching and lecturing, and occasional administrative duties at his new college Wolfson, where he did a stint as vice-gerent, he had large numbers of doctoral students, myself included, while his publishing activities proceeded apace as well.

Research-wise, looking back it is evident to me that Nick will be remembered for two bodies of work in particular among many others he contributed to on a more occasional basis. In kinship, his idea of tetradic society and tetradic kinship as an unattested but logical starting point in the world history of kinship terminologies found its niche among kinship aficionados and has influenced much subsequent work in this area, my own included, while not being short of critical responses.

Secondly, there is his suggested revision of Dumézil's tripartite model of social functions and their symbolic expression in myth among speakers of Indo-European languages, which preoccupied him more and more as time went on. Nick advocated adding a fourth, divisible function to this model, one that partly accounted for the more negative aspects of social life and/or forces external to it, and partly stood for the cosmo-social whole that brought together all the core functions; Nick's model could therefore also be seen as pentadic, not tripartite. Although he presented his ideas to Dumézil in Paris in the 1980s, the great man was not persuaded, though this did nothing to discourage a now more intellectually confident Nick from continuing along this path with, especially, large-scale comparisons between the *Mahabharata* and Homer's *Odyssey*, bringing him back full circle, in a sense, to his Classics studies at Rugby. Behind it all was also a fascination for the work, and intellectual excellence, of Marcel Mauss, on whose influential work he also wrote extensively and which formed a third pillar of his research interests in his own mind. I think it is true to say that if Nick had any intellectual hero, it was Mauss.

It also evident that, rather like Mauss, in his own writing Nick preferred the smaller compass of the article to the wider scope of the full-length book. This was partly due to his

² Out of fairness, it should also be said that Needham had his defenders, and not every member of staff broke with him.

emphasis on meticulous, inductive scholarship, but I also suspect that he found planning a book-length work demanding in a way he did not in the case of a more condensed article. Certainly some books did appear, including two books on the Thulung Rai, with whom he did fieldwork in Nepal, and two collections mostly of previously published papers, one very recent; latterly he also acted occasionally as a co-editor of collected volumes. His articles, however, are works of distinction and imagination, one of the most imaginative being his *JASO* paper, 'A dance of relatives', which laid the groundwork for his later exposition of tetradic theory.³ He was also a genuine stylist as a writer, with a way of expressing things that was not only clear and elegant but redolent with wise reflections and insights in a linguistic idiom that was all his own.

Retirement in 2001, slightly ahead of time, naturally ended Nick's official role as, by now, a reader in social anthropology, but he continued his research interests and publishing activities, and was a frequent attendee at institute seminars and functions, becoming known even to many later students who had never known him as a lecturer or supervisor and had only arrived at the Institute since his retirement. Indeed, Nick was an inveterate believer in the value of occasions like the traditional Friday seminar at the Institute as a short-cut way of keeping abreast with what was currently in the air. Unfortunately hearing problems later in life reduced the benefit of his attendance to him somewhat.

What was Nick like as a person? It is conventional in obituaries to describe one's subject honestly, warts and all, pulling no punches, but in Nick's case it is hard to fix on anything remotely negative. Normally reserved, even shy, and often giving a slight impression of awkwardness, he had a habit of rising from his chair at, say, coffee mornings or post-seminar sessions in the pub and walking off having finished what he wanted to say without so much as a nod of goodbye; I found that got a bit of getting used to. Some have suspected that he put this 'absent-minded professor' persona to good use in coping with his allotted tasks around the Institute. He could, however, get quite agitated when talking about Needham and his faults, and was extravagantly dismissive of some of the latter's later work: 'really very thin!' was his verbal reaction to me regarding one such book. A more dispassionate critical faculty was sometimes directed at other authors as well, decisively but never spitefully, and he avoided sheer polemics. Generally, indeed, he was prepared to be generous to colleagues whose work he respected without necessarily agreeing with it, and as a student I did not find myself hemmed in by his criticisms, let alone feel neglected or subjected to pet ideas of little

³ Respectively *JASO* 13/2 (1982), 139-46; and 'Tetradic theory: an approach to kinship', *JASO* 17/2 (1986), 87-109.

actual relevance, the fates of all too many students. And even after gaining my own doctorate and developing my own academic career, I kept in touch with his interests and was often glad of the opportunity to discuss matters of kinship with him (although interested in the Dumézilian project, I never contributed to it, as I attempted to do with kinship).

Indeed, as an intellectual mentor and source of advice he was hard to beat. He also endured his final illness with commendable stoicism and matter-of-factness, having had reason to anticipate it because of the fates of some of his close relatives. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, colleagues and former students, myself among them.

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N.J. Allen, Publications⁴

Abbreviations: *BSOAS* = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. *JASO* = *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*. *JRAI* = *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. *JRAS* = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

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⁴ This list is relatively complete, but there are almost certain to be some gaps. Please report any omissions to robert.parkin@anthro.ox.ac.uk. Some errors have been corrected in this version. Image and list of publications both reproduced with permission of the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford.

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FAITH AND AGENCY ON THE CAMINO:
WALKING BETWEEN SHARED ‘SUBSTANCE’ AND CULTURAL
(DIS)APPEARANCE

Abstract

Debates in the anthropology of pilgrimage are often centred around the pilgrim/tourist binary, while religious commodities are said to collapse the distinction between substance and appearance. The present study is based on fieldwork conducted on two sub-routes of the Camino de Santiago: the *Camino francés* in northern Spain, and the *Via podiensis* in southern France. In highlighting the role of movement, the way can be considered the goal. Drawing on literature on infrastructure, I contrast European cultural hegemony with ‘the spirit of the Camino’, which I conceptualize as pilgrim-agency. Commoditization, framed around locality, dominates in small municipalities that depend on external support, whereas ‘particular’ owners of *gîtes* and *albergues* conduct a form of gift-exchange rooted in the ‘spirit of the Camino’. The Camino can thus be classified as a distinct place enacted by the pilgrim through contrasting processes of selective attention to and fetishization of the path. Finally, I refer to Actor Network Theory to combine the actors and processes previously analysed into a cohesive framework. As an actor-network, the Camino comes to stand on its own, losing its ‘European’ notion; yet it extends over its particularity. This ANT framework can be applied to the concept of agency (entailing attribution), but it also transcends the New Age notion of ‘I’ and, when applied to pilgrim’s beliefs, comes to unite contrasting motifs. Such an approach highlights the fact that anthropological research need not be stuck on fixed binaries.

‘Faith is not the clinging to a shrine but an endless pilgrimage of the heart.’

— Abraham Joshua Heschel

Introduction: *Buen Camino!*

The popularity of the *Camino francés*, the major route of the European networks leading to Santiago de Compostela in north-east Spain, has reached new dimensions, with over 300,000 pilgrims walking the Camino in 2017. Roughly every five to ten kilometres, next to one of the bars or restaurants fringing the Camino that are usually called ‘El Caminante’, ‘km xyz’, or ‘Ultreia’, Erdinger Weißbräu wishes you *Buen Camino!* (see Figure 1). In between these comfortable shelters, large advertising boards ensure that the pilgrim knows there will be a place to stay in the next town, together with a jacuzzi and a massage therapist, all included in the price.

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On the last kilometres of this ‘strange road to Santiago’, as Paulo Coelho refers to it (2009), the pilgrim is just beginning to be entranced by the peaceful, soothing scents of the eucalyptus forest when his synchronicity is suddenly disrupted by the international runway of Santiago Airport. Along with the ever-growing crowd of tourist-pilgrims (*turigrinos*) on this last stretch, he is forced to spend the next few kilometres skirting the infrastructure that enables the masses to flow in in the first place, before entering the suburbs of the city, where the relics of St James are kept in the cathedral.



Figure 1. Advertisements in Galicia, Spain, 2018 (taken by author).

The ‘Camino’, as it exists today, consists of a large network of surrounding infrastructure and actors, many of them exhibiting an almost absurd degree of commodification. Jones (2010) states that religious commodities violate the separation of two distinct spheres – virtue and appearance vs. vanity and substance. Tourism, as a form of the commodification of an ‘authentic’ place-product, is often concerned with a similar binary, namely that between the local and the global. The study of pilgrimage unites tourism and religious commodification, while in itself inhabiting movement and thus complicating the theorization of a fixed notion of place.

New Age pilgrimage is most commonly framed around an analysis of the pilgrim’s perspective consisting of his personal motives and beliefs placed in an extensive (circular) debate around the pilgrim/tourist binary. Captivating as this analytical discourse is, I spent countless hours contemplating how to unite statements like ‘It helps you empty yourself’ and ‘I want to find my identity/God’ into an all-encompassing framework, even when I had already decided to step away from the debate. Instead, I moved towards an emic approach in framing

the concept of ‘Camino-substance’ as a complex system of faith that does not fit into a particular religious tradition or category, but stands on its own as a set of values and priorities. Two pilgrims I encountered describe it as followed: ‘The Camino makes you feel human again. It makes you care about others, help others, being helped by others. It doesn’t matter what the religion, age, the colour of the skin, the language is. On the Camino we are all the same. Your feet are gonna hurt just like everybody else’s.’

I will introduce this ‘spirit’ as a form of pilgrim-agency, a substance so to say, in the context of the larger hegemonic structures of European cultural bodies. Agency, in turn, will be conceptualized as an alternative form of faith linked to attribution as a process within the larger network of the Camino agent. Through the course of this dissertation, I will argue that the ‘Camino’ as an infrastructure that is both physical and conceptual has taken one a life on its own, having come to represent a distinct network-agent. In the course of my argumentation, I will move from a material to a conceptual level to apply what Latour and Latour (2005) have called the ‘material-semiotic’ method. In examining the Camino in terms of its processual character along with the agents that surround it –that is, as a ‘constantly shifting networks of relationships’ on these two levels – I will end by arguing that, since ‘the way is the goal’, substance outweighs appearance.

This is traceable throughout three layers of abstraction and from different perspectives. In the first section, I will define the substance–appearance binary through the frame of power and agency. In the second chapter, I will add locality as an agent in order to analyse the process of commoditization as a way of contributing to ‘appearance’. The Camino, I will argue, represents a separate notion of ‘particularity’, which I will illustrate in the subsequent passage. Further, I will ask how the Camino structure can be loosened from its hegemonic context as a form of conceptual agency. Finally, looking at the Camino as an actor-network sets up the necessary framework to analyse beliefs and motives within a shifting network of relationships.

Methodology: every step of the way

The general aim of this study is to provide an all-encompassing, innovative theoretical framework for the existing literature on the Camino in order to situate it within the broader debate on religious commodification. Geertz (1988: 10) has famously phrased the main challenge that ethnography poses to the anthropologist as ‘how to be a pilgrim and a cartographer at the same time’. Through the participant observation of walking alongside so many pilgrims, as well an etic analysis of infrastructure, I quite literally attempt to do exactly

that. Further, his quote also underlines the figurative use of the term ‘pilgrim’ in everyday discourse, as well as its disenchantment and secularization.

The data I use are based on participant observation on the Camino in southern France and northern Spain, along with semi-structured interviews of pilgrims and other parties involved, conducted in June-July 2018.² Participant observation in this case involved hiking the trail along with the pilgrims – that is, twenty to thirty kilometres or five-eight hours every day for five weeks, the average length of most routes within the Camino framework. My sensitivity to the topic was increased through my own experience as a pilgrim walking on one of the newly established routes from my hometown on the French-German border to Le-Puy-en-Velay, France (approximately seven hundred kilometres) in 2014 (see Figure 2). This was the starting point of the path I took as part of the fieldwork presented here.

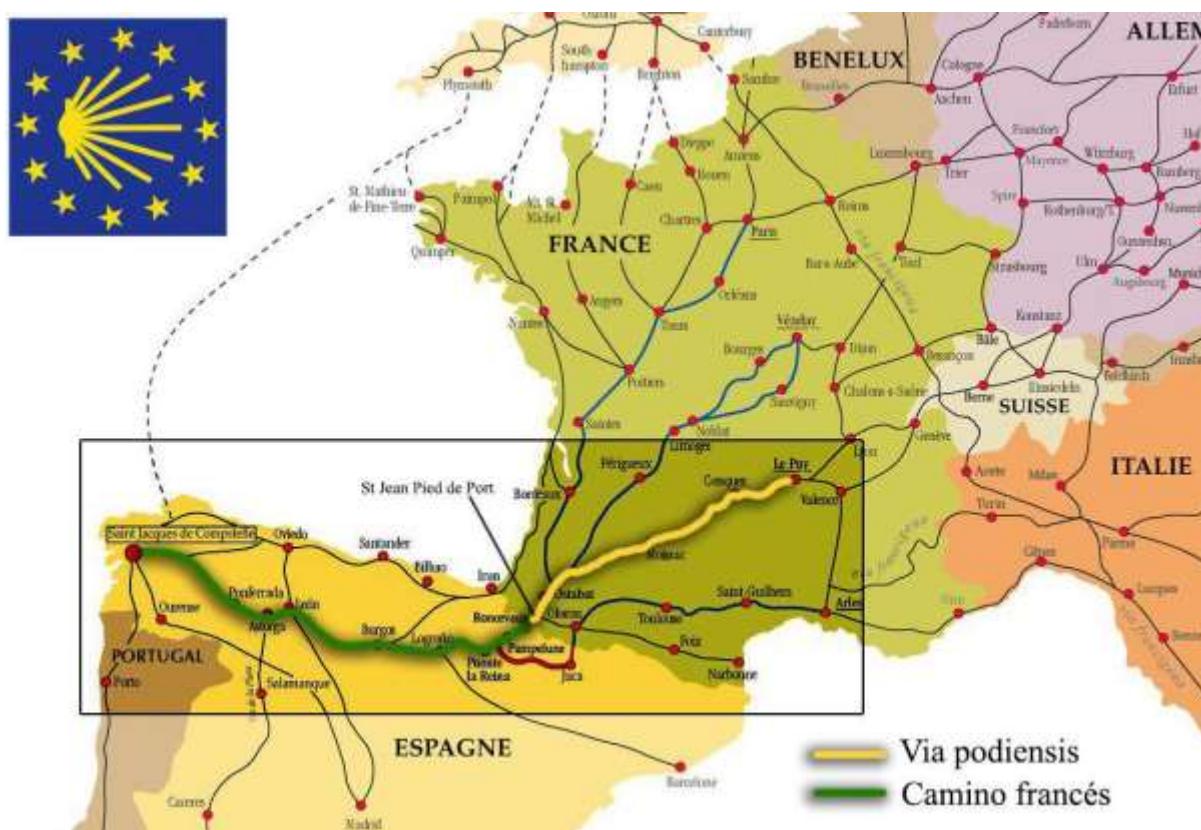


Figure 2. European network of Caminos³

² Ethical clearance was granted by the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography’s Research Ethics Committee (SAME REC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University of Oxford for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

³ Original by Manfred Zentgraf. Reproduced in accordance with GFDL and CC-BY-SA. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camino_de_Santiago#/media/File:Ways_of_St._James_in_Europe.png

Despite my previous involvement in pilgrimage, I considered this to be a fundamental (set of) step(s) in acquiring reliable and profound insight into my informants' lived experiences. First, the pilgrimage is a physically and mentally challenging journey grounded in individual sensual involvement. Movement plays a major part in the analytical framework of pilgrimage (Coleman and Eade 2004), entailing notions of embodiment and phenomenology that words can capture only partially (Csordas 1994; Morgan 2010). Secondly, the social life of pilgrims on the Camino has been characterized as revolving around the authenticity of shared experience (Frey 1998; Peelen and Jansen 2007); walking with them thus allowed a deeper interpersonal connection with pilgrims. Semi-structured interviews⁴ (including open questions) were chosen on the basis of previous recommendations in pilgrimage context; they leave room for the interviewees to reflect and phrase experiences in their own terms (Bernard 2006; Knox et al. 2014; Margry 2008b). Although I chose to rely more heavily on participant observation in the present study, the interviews contributed vitally to the understanding of the larger phenomenon and helped develop interpersonal trust and joint contemplation, which significantly enriched my own theoretical considerations.

My argument is grounded in two contrasting case studies (see Figure 3). The first is the *Camino francés* (the path that people commonly refer to as *the Camino*), which stretches all the way through northern Spain from the French side of the Basque country to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. It is by far the most popular route, with over 60% of pilgrims to Compostela taking this path, and it attracts a fairly international participation. The *Via Podiensis* (the Way of Le Puy), by contrast, which leads from the high plateau of the Massif Central to the Basque town of St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, is far less frequented and mainly chosen by Europeans from surrounding countries.



Figure 3. *Via podiensis*, France (left) and *Camino francés*, Spain (right), 2018 (taken by author).

⁴ Here translated mostly from French, but also from German and Spanish.

The combination of these two pilgrimages allows for a broadening of the often limited ethnographic horizon to the wider European context, an angle that studies focusing solely on Spain have not been able to capture. Enlarging the framework also entails abstracting the concept of the pilgrimage as such to examine the surrounding material and semiotic structures. As I was collecting my data, I realized that this dual take on pilgrimage was where the particular strength of my own fieldwork lay and thus decided to extend my initial focus to the Camino's larger social structure, thus presenting a new lens through which to view well-traversed anthropological territory.

The 'Way' is the Goal: the Camino as an infrastructure

Pilgrimage, of course, is not a religious commodity in the classical sense. More accurately, it can be seen as a dynamic 'place'-product. Highlighting the role of movement in constituting meaning has been suggested as a new analytical framework within pilgrimage research (Coleman and Eade 2004; Peelen and Jansen 2007). Coleman and Eade (2004) identify four different implications of movement in pilgrimage research: 1) movement as performative action plays a key role in creating collective identity through a 'kinetic mapping of space'; 2) movement as embodied action is linked to the pilgrim's bodily experience; 3) movement as part of a semantic field places the pilgrimage within its local culture with reference to notions of landscape, space and place; and 4) movement as metaphor refers to how discourse is linked to both pilgrimage as a broad abstract category and its more refined aspects. I have chosen to adopt a rather unconventional take on pilgrimage as infrastructure, as this provides insights into virtually all of these aspects.

What characterizes pilgrimage on the Camino is the emphasis on the path as such and the walking it involves as a multipotent act, rather than the actual physical goal of Santiago (Feldman 2017; Morinis 1992; Margry 2008a). The Camino is the 'space where religion [in the broad implication of the term] is "made" or "done" through the movement of the body' (Peelen and Jansen 2007). As Frey (1998) outlines in her ethnography of the *Camino francés*, notions of authenticity revolve around the means and distance of travel, a phenomenon that has possibly increased in the context of commercialization as a way of sharpening the increasingly blurred lines between pilgrim and tourist.

The exemplary case of the revived version of the Camino as a transit- rather than a goal-focused pilgrimage has triggered the emergence of similar trails all over Europe (Margry 2008a; Ramírez 2011), thus expanding its 'place'. With movement coming to the foreground

in the context of pilgrimage, the emphasis is mostly on the pilgrim as an actor – yet commoditization is linked to physical surroundings and the material context. At the same time, New Age spirituality and pilgrimage have been examined within the boundaries of the ‘self’-subject. With reference to Actor Network Theory (ANT), I will take an encompassing approach that unites the different actors, both human and non-human, under one theoretical roof, looking at the different analytical meta-levels they represent. I will accentuate the processual embodied subject, enacting particularity as place. As such, movement – a prescribed European doctrine – helps construct the ‘imagined community’ of the Camino that sets it apart from the power discourse.

The mobility framework highlights the path over the goal, and so the Camino can essentially be regarded as an infrastructure. It enables the pilgrim to get to his or her physical goal, the worldly destination that is ideally Santiago but that has shifted practically in many cases (e.g. to Finisterre or St Jean Pied de Port). Simultaneously, it marks the figurative way to an ‘abstract’ mental goal – to God, to self-realization, to change or transition. It is thus the enactment of a more symbolic form of infrastructure that nevertheless has an actual physical representation, a network of local infrastructure surrounding it. This abstract frame naturally implies that pilgrimage is performed and embodied, and it allows one to see movement as a semantic field with reference to surrounding structures and actors. In addition, it adds to the study of infrastructure in that it demonstrates alternative ways of conceptualization: we can see infrastructure as an imagined enacted construct, while underlining a ‘bottom-up’ (agency) approach where top-down (power) approaches have been more usual. Within such a frame, we are able to re-examine the religious commodity debate from a power perspective that comprises material and non-material actors alike.

Camino politics – culturally speaking

The revival of the ancient pilgrimage route to Santiago can be traced back to the late 1960s (starting with the *Camino francés*), from where on the distinct path, demarcated with symbols of the scallop shell, as it is today, was gradually defined and established (Cazaux 2011; Egan 2007). The Camino is now part of a larger elaborate network of ‘sub-Caminos’ that stretches throughout Europe (Figure 2). It was only after the classification of the so-called ‘Ways of St James’ as the first European Cultural Route in 1987 that other trails and tracks, both within and outside the Camino framework, were defined and delineated within Europe (ibid.). In the following, a European guide to the ways of St James was released as a referential textbook with the vision to promote these roads to Santiago, privileged spaces directly placed within the

construct of ‘European culture’. A few years later, in 1993, the *Camino francés* was declared a UNESCO world heritage and thus elevated from a European to a broader international political context, further increasing its popularity.

Regarding the *Via Podiensis*, only distinct sections of the GR65,⁵ along with specific buildings and architectural ensembles, have been classified by UNESCO as cultural heritage sites. Historically speaking, the choice of the actual paths and trails is somewhat arbitrary: although they pass the major religious sites and towns that are known for their historical significance in relation to the pilgrimage, the ‘middle parts’ would vary from pilgrim to pilgrim. Before way-markings appeared as a means to standardize traveller’s routes in the twentieth century, people did not follow a distinct path but took whatever way they were presented with. Today’s material composition of the Camino can thus be seen as a political project, the pilgrim’s experience and attention being susceptible to manipulation through the physical form of the path.

The consequence of such ‘pluralizing’ Caminos in Europe, along with the emphasis on the road, is that, although all parts are framed under the same umbrella term (‘Camino’), Santiago is no longer the ultimate physical goal. In comparison, the Japanese pilgrimage to Shikoku, as described by Reader (2006), is not limited to a single path, nor to a single starting point or destination. Pilgrims do not have to follow a particular order within this network of 88 sites and temples, as the linked circuit can be divided into segments that are then completed throughout the lifespan. Thus, the cohesion lies in the road between the sites. Looking at the larger European network of Caminos, we can see the parallels between these two pilgrimages.

On the *Via Podiensis*, one is always asked about one’s final destination. For more than 70% of the people I engaged with, the *Via podiensis* was ‘their’ Camino, with St Jean as the final goal of their journey. Many native French-speakers choose this alternative Camino, as they prefer to be within a familiar and less frequented environment. At the beginning of my journey, I was surprised to find that pilgrims feel no need to explain why they chose this Camino over the one that actually leads to Santiago. It just seemed like a natural ‘extension’ to them. A woman from Québec was inspired to take the Camino by her father, who had always wanted to walk the *Camino francés*. Despite his particular influence, she had chosen this route. This is just one of many examples of people coming from abroad specifically for *this* Camino,

⁵ Namely the official hiking trail (*Grande Randonnée*) overlapping with the Camino throughout this section.

with no explicit intention to go on to Santiago. Though some people do consider continuing eventually, many do not set out initially with that intention.

It is quite frequent for people to divide the Camino into yearly sub-parts of between a hundred and two hundred kilometres each. Two French women I met close to Navarrenx had been walking the *Via podiensis* in such a manner for three consecutive years. When we arrived in St Jean, I asked whether they would continue with the *Camino francés* next year; they said they were considering starting a new Camino in France instead. It seems that ‘the way’ has become the goal – and the pilgrim, consequentially, *moves* on the road to Santiago, rather than *going to* Santiago.

The Camino, as it exists today, has abstracted itself from Santiago as a place and turned into an extensive space of infrastructural networks. Although the European sub-Caminos could be seen as ‘discontinuous, multi-sited objects of study’ (Marcus 1995: 97), I will argue that they unfold their meaning as a unity. Pilgrimage can provide a means for retracing ‘culture’ through interactive physical emergence within the historical and religious landscape of the country, with Shikoku in Japan being the primary example (Reader 2006). Basu (2004) provides a metaphorical account of root-tourism to Scotland as pilgrimage. However, ‘definitions of Europe are frequently both arbitrary and politically charged. [...] Like the nation-state (against which it is often identified), “Europe” can be seen as much as a creation of literature and myth as it is of power’ (Goddard 1994: 25-6). As noted by Reader (2007) in one of his articles, though the Turners’ (2011 [1987]) work on pilgrimage was ground-breaking within the discipline, their focus on anti-structure and ‘communitas’ as guiding principles (the pilgrim being transposed to a liminal stage and ‘voting with his feet’) resulted in the neglect of top-down dynamics—that is, the influence that higher (religious) authorities exert on the context of pilgrimage. Although a precise analysis of all stakeholders would go beyond the limitations of this study, the construction of a larger European network of Caminos is deeply intertwined with the political context and as such highly relevant to the present analysis.

Larkin (2013) describes how infrastructural projects can be analysed to reveal political patterns of rationality as commonly overseen ways of giving rise to the ‘apparatus of governmentality’ described by Foucault. By placing the larger system in the centre of the assessment and adapting a ‘holistic’ interactive approach, a larger inherent rationale can be revealed, a new form of infrastructure that goes beyond mere logistics by combining top-down policy-making with a ‘poetics of aesthetics’ (Hughes 1993; Larkin 2013). In the context of the

Camino, technopolitics constitutes what Margry (2008a) frames as ‘the religion of heritage’ – political aspirations to create a pan-European identity and thus hold the political construct of the European Union together in times of ambivalence and heterogeneity. Collective history and cultural heritage are emphasized through the lens of Christianity, drawn along the contrasting lines of Islam. In its poetic mode, the Camino is detached from its simple ‘technological’ function (to take the pilgrim to his physical or abstract goal) and instrumentalized to re-create a politically fabricated Christian past and ambiguously ‘spiritual’ present – the latter, quite ironically, is tailored to modern conditions.

In response to the pluralizing, often conflicting spiritual situations that prevail in Western modernity, such heritage is ‘employed as an ostensibly secular portmanteau category, which can in a more neutral form simultaneously remould religion and give it a more open shape’ (Margry 2008a: 16). The Camino is presented as a combined account that ‘Makes You Feel Good!’ (as the *Cultural Routes of the European Council* brochure euphorically proclaims) on various levels. Frey (1998) documents the content of a pamphlet issued by the major Spanish pilgrim association⁶ in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Spanish Ministry of Culture:

To go on pilgrimage to Santiago in the traditional mode is more than a tourist or sport trip made on foot over an artistic route in contact with nature. It's all of this, but also much more. It is to find yourself in the religious and historical routes of Europe, to renovate a way of interior transformation, to walk at the rhythm of other centuries, it is to [...]wander. (ibid.: 128)

Not only is European history canonised, it constructs a mythical ‘European’ landscape and identity that encompasses notions of gender, race, and sexuality (Notermans 2016; Roseman and Fife 2008). Such fictional space is reinterpreted and twisted on the level of concrete actors: ‘the institutional story cannot complete its ending in the wake of a peripatetic acephalous community that resists its role in the definition of spaces larger than the Camino. Europe can wait, because for pilgrims, the Camino cannot’ (Egan 2007: 52). In line with the Turnerian framework of liminality, the Camino is perceived by many as a way to escape civil society and the rigid structures it imposes. The ‘spirit of the Camino’ stands for an ideal egalitarian and altruistic community. It thus has some of the characteristics of an anarchist society in the sense of Scott (2009) in *The art of not being governed*. Larkin (2013: 333) writes:

⁶ The Spanish Federation of the Associations of Friends of the Camino de Santiago.

Roads [...] encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real. [...] They form us as subjects not just on a technopolitical level but also through this mobilization of affect and the senses of desire, pride, and frustration, feelings which can be deeply political.

Such underlying concepts can be revealed in ‘engag[ing] infrastructural relations as moments of enchantment’ (Harvey and Knox 2012: 525). The Camino as a pilgrimage infrastructure affords, both literally and figuratively, a particular ‘way’ of being social, an alternative route in life; it is saturated with hopes and aspirations for a spiritual and personal journey – ‘wandering’, as phrased in the pamphlet. This alludes to what Soprano (2017) frames as ‘freedom with a small f’ – a subjective experience of agency within capitalist hegemony. Taxi-drivers in Bangkok are drawn into a precarious lifestyle that they perceive as emancipatory self-employment. This discourse of freedom (*‘Itsaraphāp’*) is instituted by the post-Fordist Thai state to fit the new economic model. Here, the importance of distinguishing between Freedom (with a capital F) as a theoretical absolute notion and a contextual understanding of freedom is emphasized. The present case study faces a similar dilemma. The Camino denotes notions that are both positive (freedom to express, to wander) and negative (freedom from mundane constraints, from structure), as described by Berlin (1969). That is, agency and power exist within the same discursive framework.⁷

Thus, the Camino set-up is not necessarily political to begin with. As it is embedded in the European heritage discourse, it becomes increasingly difficult to discern the two ‘imagined communities’ of present concern – the liminal pilgrim-universe versus the site of ‘European’ heritage. Where do we draw the lines between European ‘cultural’ hegemony and pilgrim agency? Furthermore, if European heritage is a fictional product that must be carefully carved out, then is there more to the poetic mode? Within the EU discourse, the substance/appearance binary unfolds a new meaning. ‘Appearance’ lies in constructing a cultural heritage product, whereas ‘substance’ refers to the spirit of the Camino, revolving around a particular kind of authentic altruism. Looking solely at the distinction on an abstract level, they seem to be following the same direction. By including the notion of locality as a mediator, I hope to be adding a new dimension to the discussion: commoditization.

⁷ Yet in this case, such ‘freedom’ is not associated with an insecure lifestyle but is simply used to enact a European identity.

Camino substance – particularly local

Ortner (1995) argues that resistance, encased in its infinite layers of power structures, is full of ambiguities and can often not be framed as one cohesive strand; even in top-down relations of power, the ‘higher instance’ often has something to offer. There is yet another stakeholder that should be included: local authorities that seek out institutional recognition as they benefit from their financial and cultural backing. That is, they benefit in a direct manner through funds and endowments, though at the same time tourism is indirectly promoted and often contributes to the cultural preservation of villages struck by the rural exodus⁸ (Padin and Pardellas de Blas 2015; Ramírez 2011). The contrast between the two case studies dealt with here is particularly powerful in underlining such dynamics. The *Via podiensis* and the *Camino francés* seem to represent distinct points in time with regard to the extent of their commoditization.

Commoditization is defined as the process throughout which economic goods are homogenized from the consumer’s perspective in relation to distinct attributes they possess (Appadurai 1988). To apply this to our case studies – since walking the Camino is an activity that is essentially ‘free’ in itself – what can be commodified (as in turned into a commodity) and then commoditised is the infrastructure surrounding it – one can pay for certain privileges (security being one of them). International stakeholders and local authorities often jointly organize overpriced tourist hiking package trips, with accommodation and food pre-booked, and luggage transported. At root, of course, this contradicts the idea of a pilgrim leading a simple existence, departing into the unknown.

In order to understand fully the significance of a pilgrimage, the discourses and practices of various actors have to be considered (Eade and Sallnow 2013 [1991]). In shifting the debate to the owners of pilgrim accommodation (*gîtes* and *albergues*) offered along both parts of the Camino, I will relate the tension between substance and appearance to a locality/‘particularity’ binary. Both the Basque region in France and the Galician region in Spain represent distinct cultural areas fearing their ‘disappearance’ within a nation state. They are, above all, localities, and as such they are seeking to preserve their existing status.

Gift-exchange (as opposed to commodity-exchange), is commonly described as inalienable from the giver: a power (in line with the Maori notion of *hau*) ‘resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back’ (Mauss, 2002 [1990]: 3). This binary has been

⁸ Of course, it can have just the opposite effect in contributing to the homogenization of the cultural landscape: commodification as the counter-process to culture (Kopytoff 1986).

refined and questioned by various scholars. Daniels (2009) has pointed out that in Japan's hierarchical capitalist society, gifts are essentially commodities. In the context of the Camino, which is ingrained with a spirit of sociality, a monetary transaction is a gift-exchange at heart; it entails a social form of reciprocity along with the usual exchange of money for services. Here, a useful binary can be drawn: as I will argue, the interest of local owners lies in commodity transactions, whereas 'particular' owners imbued with the Camino-spirit are essentially conducting gift-exchange (see Figures 4, 5). Thus, in contrast with common notions of locality in similar contexts, the former seek out the 'appearance' of the Camino over its 'substance' in context of global-local (power) dynamics.





Figures 4, 5. Gift-exchange⁹ (above) in France and commodity-exchange (below) in Spain, 2018 (taken by author).

Aroue, the first stop in the Basque country after the three French routes have come together, does not ‘officially’ form part of the path leading to St-Jean-Pied-de-Port in the sense that the scallop shell way-markings do not directly lead the pilgrim through the village, which he thus has to take a slight detour from the path to reach. Nevertheless, in the context of the growing popularity of the hiking trails, the *gîte communal* that opened there several years ago has now been featured in the guidebooks of most travellers,¹⁰ where it is suggested as an *étape*—(‘stage’), a daily goal that most pilgrims follow quite rigorously. In many ways, the *gîte* fills a previous gap in the infrastructure of pilgrim accommodation and food supply, though with benefits for the village as well. Hence, upon our arrival, the owner strongly emphasised a description of an alternative route that would prevent pilgrims from walking back to the original spot on the path, but instead guide them through the entire village, eventually leading back to the demarcated Camino and shortening the hiking trail by a couple of kilometres. Although taking detours is commonly frowned upon, he managed to convince our entire group to take his advice.¹¹

⁹ Pilgrim reception notice put out by a private household.

¹⁰ Both German Outdoor and Rother, as well as French MiamMiamDoDo.

¹¹ We later all agreed that the reluctance to walk back had outweighed the idea of a detour.

The path, though ‘arbitrary’ to begin with, is relatively fixed, though modifications may be made in the long run (Cazaux 2011). If such an alternative path is taken up by most hikers, the description in the guidebooks, and eventually the official way-markings, will be altered. Being officially established as a stop on the Camino creates a lot of potential for the small local businesses (restaurants, shops) that are on the verge of dying out – which, in turn, helps preserve the local Basque culture, which is often contrasted with the larger French state. EU funds and the ‘official’ tourist hiking packages offered by the Cultural Routes of the European Council program would contribute in a similar manner. Locality can thus be emphasised temporarily through ‘global’ or international recognition and funds, while ‘skipping’ the status of a nation state. In many such places,¹² exchange is terminated with the receipt of a counterpart value, thus making it a commodity transaction (Kopytoff 1986). This type of accommodation is most common in Galicia (the last part of the *Camino francés*), where ‘proper’ hostels and hotels, barely distinguishable from any such hospitality services around the globe and in a ‘secular’ context, employ staff to perform ‘alienated labour’¹³ (as in, detached from the ‘production’ of the pilgrimage – its collective spirit). One of my Spanish informants said that ‘In many of these small villages they try to – not rob you – but yes, they know there are only certain places you can have food or have a drink. But that’s not fair – you get to a big city, and you get fairer prices.’

It is important to note, however, that to most *gîte*-owners in France their work does not bring any profit. In contrast with Spain, there are very few *donativos*.¹⁴ Maintaining infrastructure for pilgrims on this part of the Camino is thus dependent on independent, devoted individuals. The money they make barely pays the bills: it is merely a ‘partial transaction which should be considered in the context of the entire transaction’ (Kopytoff 1986: 69). The personal labour they put into maintenance and other services – a gift inalienable from the donor – is paid off by indulging in the collective effervescence of the pilgrims (the ‘spirit of the Camino’); reciprocity is implied through the anticipation of such sociality.¹⁵ In fact, the majority of owners are (ex)pilgrims themselves. They form different associations that strengthen their bonds, supporting each other through recommendations and pamphlets (e.g. ‘les haltes vers Compostelle’). In France, as a consequence, many owners are not locals but ‘particulars’

¹² Although some may be classified as intermediate.

¹³ With reference to Marx (1990 [1867]).

¹⁴ Accommodation solely based on donations, and run by volunteers.

¹⁵ This might arguably be classified as a ‘free gift’ (Laidlaw 2000; Parry 1986), as nothing is expected from the receiver directly. At this point, an elaboration on pilgrim’s sense of obligation would be appropriate, but that would go beyond the boundaries of this study.

moving to the ‘fringe’ of Camino from different regions or countries. They buy up *gîtes* that their previous proprietors have ‘given up on’ – a common phenomenon. An owner in St-Jean-Pied-de-Port recounted regularly having seen them come and go throughout the past decades: ‘They quit because they realise they can’t make any money. You have to be passionate about it. Most people who stay have done the Camino themselves – and this is their way of staying on it.’

This is remarkable because, as both the ending point of the *Via podiensis* (along with the other two French routes) and the starting point of the *Camino francés*, one would expect the accommodation industry to flourish in St-Jean. It seems that, to a large extent, the spirit of the Camino determines the price, so that accommodation transactions fall into the category of gift-exchange. That is, most pilgrims seek out the most basic, inexpensive *gîtes*, while their devoted owners try to keep the price as low as possible for the pilgrims, providing extra services in the form of hospitality and advice. As a result, *gîte* prices cannot be raised significantly by owners seeking a profit. As the road progresses, this notion changes. Especially on the last hundred kilometres, which one must complete on foot in order to get one’s official certificate, the Compostela, advertisements for expensive hotel rooms with extra services start popping up. This is because, as so-called *turigrinos* (tourist pilgrims) start emerging, the demand increases, and cheaper options get booked out. As fewer people follow ‘the spirit of the Camino’ and become more willing to pay for comfort, commodity transactions take over. Locality, contrasted with a globality of ‘nothingness’ and linked to notions of authenticity, is a common factor recognized in tourism and commoditization (Cohen 1979; Massey 2010), yet in this case it is particularity that resonates with the ‘substance’ of the Camino.

Kopytoff (1986) sees culture, by contributing to singularization,¹⁶ as the counter-process to commoditization. In many ways, this is what the Camino in its particularity does, even though it is in sharp contrast with the surrounding ‘culture’. *Albergues* and *gîtes* are not merely places to sleep, they are meant to make the pilgrim feel at home, providing a space for self-expression and indulging in the collective ‘spirit of the Camino’. Yet, it is precisely this idea, almost like a longing for authenticity in modern times, that attracts many pilgrim-tourists to begin with: ‘non-saleability imparts to a thing a special aura of apartness from the mundane and the common’ (Ibid.: x). The aura of gift-exchange with which the Camino is imparted entails idealized notions that many people specifically seek out.

¹⁶ That is, by taking commodities out of their original sphere.

Camino localities sharpen their regional cultures yet commoditize what I have defined as Camino-substance. In collaborating in the EU discourse for their local benefits, they violate the separation between the ‘altruistic’ substance of the Camino and its appearance as a way of emphasising ‘culture’ (implying both the larger international framework and their own locality). ‘Culture’, in this understanding, does not singularize, but ‘particularity’¹⁷ does, eventually commoditizing again.¹⁸ Yet, where do we locate this ‘particularity’?

Camino-place: walking a fine line

The Turners (2011 [1987]) note that ‘pilgrim trails cut across the boundaries of provinces, realms, and even empires’. Looking at the Camino’s physical constitution, we can see its symbolic character as an infrastructure. It does not constitute a distinct path in its own right but is composed of ‘profane’ or mundane (infra)structures – parts of roads and hiking paths in forests that have simply been ‘chosen’ to be used (see Figure 6). Thus, the way-markings of the pilgrim’s scallop shell turn it into an infrastructure of its own. It is on this basis that the imagined community is constructed.¹⁹ This theoretical framework, in line with Turner’s concept of *communitas*, has been widely employed (Egan 2007; Frey 1998; Peelen and Jansen 2007). I have therefore chosen to focus on the material aspects that contribute to this notion, rather than the social ones. These approaches underline movement’s performative character as a mapping of space and identity within it (see Coleman and Eade 2004).



Figure 6. The ‘demarcated’ path, Spain (taken by author).

¹⁷ Although technically frameable as a distinct sub-culture.

¹⁸ Of course, this notion of particularity may just as well be seen as the ‘global’ force transforming the local region (most people come in from the outside), but since it is a religious commodity we are concerned with here, pursuing this angle would mean going beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁹ Absurd as it seems, it does not ultimately differ from the concept of borders between nation states that Anderson (2006 [1983]) refers to.

In examining the Camino's relationship to outside structures on a physical level, I will highlight the contribution of movement as part of a semantic field. Feld and Basso (1999) state that place is the site of intense fusion, as it transcends mind and body, physical and semiotic. Anthropology has been concerned with how place (almost as a physical equivalent to Bourdieu's habitus) is all-embracing, how it encompasses biography. Emplacement, *being* in such a multipotent place, has become a key concept in such analyses. But it is instead displacement that governs modern society, a sensation that pilgrimage 'artificially' evokes; and yet pilgrims report feeling they are not just 'in the right place' but part of a collective community attached to a specific site – that is, an infrastructure in motion that is constantly enacted. I will thus explore how a sense of place prevails and proves itself relevant without an actual fixed site as a point of reference but an 'imagined' space of community. Drawing on ANT, 'both places and mobilities are to be analysed as relational effects' (Duim et al. 2012: 10).

A sense of place is 'extracted' from a contrast between locality and 'particularity' – that is, pilgrims selectively attend to the 'Camino' as a fixed, separate entity, rather than seeing it as what it is in 'worldly' terms – a combination of pre-existing local structures. It is, literally and figuratively, a parallel path in life. On the one-day hike before St-Jean-Pied-de-Port on the *Via podiensis*, I stopped at a farm selling beverages and self-made products. The small self-service counter was accompanied by a sign with instructions in French and Basque. During the last few days the Camino had been teeming with such bilingual signs, both official and private. As I was sipping the last bit of my coffee, another pilgrim came by. 'Finally... days of hiking without a proper place to stop!', he exclaimed while entering. From the short conversation we had I could tell that he was French. As I left to continue my hike, I overheard him ask the farmer, who had just come back, if 'that weird language' on the sign was German – instructions were marked, as so many times before, in French and Basque. This example is not meant to refer to the lack of knowledge or cultural concern on the part of this man, nor to place any emphasis on the tensions between Basqueland and France, but, in my understanding, simply reflects the liminal character of the Camino. As a fellow pilgrim put it this way: 'You live on the Camino and you are in Spain, but you don't get to know Spain.'

Another factor that contributes to the Camino's particularity in terms of space is a fetish-like attachment to the material structure of the Camino, the way-markings set out by official authorities. Hart (1986) states that there are 'two sides of the coin:' money is simultaneously a matter of top-down state and bottom-up markets. Fetishism, then, is a 'shifting balance'

(Walker 2017). The physical properties of money can be evaluated, emphasising its materiality over the backing of the state's authority as a form of creative agency. Historically speaking, there have never been distinct routes to Santiago, and pilgrims made their individual ways, passing through major religious centres. But to most pilgrims, the idea of losing the path represents a major fear that is associated with strong emotional reactions. An American woman told me that, on her first day after Le Puy, she had found herself completely lost in the middle of a field, sobbing like she had not done in years – 'blocked' and incapable of acting on her own. From a worldly (local) point of view, her situation was not forlorn – after all, she was just in the French countryside, with several villages close by. These days, it is quite easy to find your own way around with Google maps, and one can sometimes find a logistically more suitable option by taking a detour – yet pilgrims are highly attached to the 'original' path.²⁰

This is strongly linked to notions of authenticity, but it also draws on the concept of 'staying on the right path': the 'physical dimension [...] cannot be separated from the metaphorical dimension associated with the pilgrimage to Santiago' (Cazaux 2011: 362). Keeping to the major route and managing the challenges it poses has a symbolically strong meaning attached to it, not least because of the narratives centred around it. Coelho (2009 [1987]) describes the 'strange road to Santiago' as a mythical journey revolving around spiritual 'portals' linked to specific locations on the Camino. Kerkeling (2009), a best-selling German author, writes: '[...] every time I deviate in the slightest from the path, the butterflies disappear. No sooner am I back on the pilgrims' trail than I see swarms of colourful butterflies' (ibid.: 83). A rumour was spread amongst pilgrims close to Burgos that someone had put up fake yellow flashes²¹ to lead pilgrims on to the wrong path. And indeed, we later came to know that many people had got lost; here was a girl in our group who had deviated from the original path for almost twenty kilometres without noticing. Fetishizing the material structure of the Camino is not a directed action to 'supplant or circumvent the state ["Europe", in this case]' (Walker 2017: 288), but a loose form of agency.

Following the path concurrently implies that pilgrims are highly susceptible to structuring; they show what I frame as a kind of selective attention (Broadbent 1958; Eysenck and Keane, 2015) to Camino-related content 'walking through' a cognitive and sensual 'tunnel' that filters out yellow arrows and scallop shells from an ocean of local signs and mundane impressions.

²⁰ As the Aroue example has shown, if an authority figure or a guidebook proposes a detour, this notion might change.

²¹ Sometimes used instead of the scallop shells.

This is not necessarily negatively connotated – they are simply moving within their liminal space. Such selective attention may not be intentional but part of an unconscious filtering of information. As cognitive psychology has shown, this is a ‘routine’ process in all individuals that helps them deal with the overwhelming amount of information we are confronted with (ibid.). However, selective attention can just as well be intentionally informed, as the following example illustrates.

On 14th July, the day of the *fête nationale* in France, I stayed in a *gîte* in St-Jean-Pied-de-Port. As the celebrations had already started, there was not a single empty bed in the room: the lights were switched off, the room in dead silence expect for the faint noises of the fireworks in the distance. This was the starting point for most pilgrims – the much-feared rite of passage through the Pyrénées to Roncesvalles lying just before them. Thus, they were completely ingrained in the Camino, the demands it poses, the challenges it implies. To many, this is an internal journey reflected in an outside structure, spiritual and mental before anything else, and so they willingly disengage from the local environment or limit their involvement to a minimum.

The concern here is an emphasis on ‘Camino-authenticity’ over local authenticity. Thus, one finds emplacement in displacement by carving out the Camino in contrast with its surroundings. Where change and movement are the only constants, the pilgrim finds steadiness in a rigid pursuit of a given infrastructure/path. It is here that the Camino as infrastructure unfolds a different meaning: it is a guideline providing the pilgrim with stability and security. Fashionable dress can be seen as both a way of following the (symbolically) righteous path in relation to the ‘substance’ of Islam through the expression of beauty as an essentially Godly feature and a way of breaking with the code of modesty the religious tradition prescribes (Jones 2010). Similarly, the rigid pursuit of the physical trail by the pilgrim may be interpreted as a way of expressing Camino-substance in being completely engaged with its ‘particular’ structures and spirit, while the fact that the whole set-up is constructed for the walker to enact ‘Europeanness’ proposes appearance. In ruling out outside influences (whether consciously or not), the boundaries are sharpened: the Camino is negatively defined as a distinct place.

Actor network: one step further

There is a second dimension of the ‘poetics of aesthetics’, one that is ‘not a representation but an embodied experience governed by the ways infrastructures produce the ambient conditions of everyday life’ (Larkin 2013: 336-7) – that is, the sensual and cognitive engagement that a

particular infrastructure brings about through its material composition, or what has been called its ‘affordances’ (Gibson, 2014 [1979]). Sensations such as speed, temperature and pain become relevant physical dimensions. Since the infrastructure I am describing is not an actual ‘thing’ in itself but a composition of external networks that culminates in a place carved out along the lines of its symbolic external borders, its ‘poetics of aesthetics’ are drawn from the movement of the pilgrims as embodied action. It exists through constant enactment. Selective attention, as a process filtering Camino markings and messages, is achieved in alignment with the visual configuration/arrangement of the Camino-structure as it is perceived by the agent in displacement. It moves through the sensual ‘apparatus’, the body as the existential ground of space and ‘fluid’ place.

Latour and Latour (2005) advocate the dissolution of the substance/process binary when describing the ‘social’. I would like to apply this framework to the notion of place. It is not merely a fixed physical entity but essentially relational, a solid place only with reference to other structures. At the same time, such solidity is established through movement, as it forms the integrity of the Camino as perceived place – it is a ‘mutable mobile’ (e.g. Law and Singleton 2005:). Following ‘radical ontology’, movement, in shaping sensual engagement and constituting emplacement in displacement for the pilgrim-actor, comes to possess a certain agency on its own. ANT suggests that agency lies between the human subject and the non-human object, or more precisely, in the constantly shifting heterogeneous associations between them. What this framework adds to the present power debate is the idea that power and agency, just like ‘place’, are not just relational and fluid (Abu-Lughod, 1990), but are constantly re-enacted in a multifaceted network encompassing different perspectives, represented here as layers of analysis.

As noted by Morgan (2010), Latour’s framework does not consider phenomenology. As a consequence, Latour highlights the importance of the embodied subject (Mohan and Warnier 2017). On the level of the pilgrimage, agency is characterized as an interaction of pilgrim and way, a constant embodiment through the process of movement and sensual engagement. As a non-physical process, it is materialized in the walker, co-jointly forming such referential place. But, as we have seen in the examples discussed above, place in turn interacts with the walker, affecting his cognition, his decision processes. Frey (1998: 112) writes:

The body and the sensations it opens the pilgrim up to become a new unexplored territory. An American professor commented as he finished the journey, ‘Now my body seemed to walk itself, the road walking my body.’

Rather than walk on the road and dominate it (as one does in a car), one's body often responds to the road and its demands.

One of my informants, who worked with pilgrims on a daily basis, stated:

On the English Camino, there is one stage where you have to walk through a tunnel of trees, and several people just started crying in there, without a reason, and at the end of the tunnel, they suddenly stopped. Some of them tried to walk back into the tunnel, but something stopped them from going.

The way supposedly acts upon them. On the conceptual level of the pilgrim, giving up agency and control creates a symbolic and literal space for expression, for example offering a discursive frame for emotions (Peelen and Jansen 2007). Pilgrimage has often been framed around the lines of therapy and healing (Schnell and Pali 2013; Smith and Kelly 2006). Boddy (1988: 14) describes how spirit healing rituals can help infertile women in 'shifting [their] illness to another plane of discourse' and thus transcend their culturally overdetermined selves within a socially appropriated frame.

As mentioned previously, through the spiritual ritual of walking, pilgrims are seeking to step out of their original fast-paced lifestyle of Bauman's (2000) 'liquid modernity', temporarily dissolving social status, expectations and roles. The EU discourse, in promoting and elevating the Camino to a plane where such pilgrimage is not only culturally accepted but well-esteemed, plays a large part in creating the necessary room and appropriation for it. Here, power and agency are 'two sides of the same coin', existing as two arrows of action pointing in a similar direction, but on different levels. The official, carefully constructed 'appearance' of the Camino contributes to commercialization (on a large scale), yet, zooming in on the Camino itself, the multipotent 'spiritual' discourse set up around it attracts 'genuine' pilgrims who participate in the 'pure' substance of the Camino. Yet this is only revealed by looking at the 'shifting networks of relationships' and relying upon perspective.

In unfolding such agency on its own, it becomes detached from its physical notion of place altogether. As an abstract entity, it is not just loosened from specific Camino-structures within the larger network and detached from local surroundings, it is also disconnected from its 'Europeanness'. The growing popularity of the Camino has inspired South Koreans to set up their own 'Camino' on Cheju Island, and many other hiking trails have seen a revival in a similar timeframe (e.g. the Pacific Crest Trail, the Appalachian Trail). A woman from Tanzania I met in the Pyrenees told me she had been returning to the Camino every year because she had

not yet been able to find a similar trail, resting on the same spiritual essence and with such an elaborate infrastructure built up around it. In fact, knowing I was writing about pilgrimage, she asked me if I knew of any other hiking trails that were ‘in the spirit of the Camino’. I got into a similar conversation with an Italian *hospitalera*²² enquiring about the other Camino trails around Europe and how ‘developed’ the accommodation network was. Ultimately, she concluded that she would probably try the Shikoku trail in Japan next.

Gabriel, a taxi driver from Santiago I met just after he had completed the first part of the *Camino francés*, represents a quite peculiar case. He is part of the infrastructure himself, lives its commoditization and commercialization on a daily basis as a chauffeur for pilgrims, has seen the city of Santiago transformed over the course of his life, and yet is attracted to its spirit: ‘The Camino is to give and to receive’. A Danish co-pilgrim told me she was walking the *Camino francés* in order to get inspiration for how to lead a certain kind of lifestyle, one that was detached from possession and place, living in an altruistic community. The ‘spirit’, though particularly enacted on the Camino, is not limited to it. What draws out the contrast with locality can be transcended beyond the borders of Europe, and what dominates the trail as a ‘micro’-notion vanishes in the bigger picture. The ‘appearance’ of the European framework has thus lost its relevance under such considerations. Another interesting aspect here is that it is the Camino’s infrastructure that attracts people in the first place, with accommodation being the aspect, as I have argued, that is being commoditized the most with the growing demand. Pilgrims are looking for a certain level of security, but as soon as it gets too elaborate, authenticity intervenes; thus, these two must be carefully balanced.

Conclusion: conceptual agency and the infrastructure of belief

The actor-network frame can be neatly fitted into the notion of tropes and performances. Concerning the conceptual metaphor ‘The Way is the Goal’, I have argued on various meta-levels. Not only does it refer to the physical notion of Santiago and represents the focus on Camino-substance in contrast with external structures, it is, above all, reflected in the emphasis on movement as processual actor. There is yet another material-semiotic relationship here: the pilgrim enacts the Camino as part of its actor network on a physical level: while the metaphor conceptually ‘make[s] a movement’ in semantic space, it ‘takes [its] subjects and move[s] them along a dimension or a set of dimensions’ (Fernandez 1986: 12). The Camino is defined through semantic and physical motion. Metaphor too, as personified by Fernandez, ‘can lead

²² ‘Volunteer’.

performance and create a scenario' (ibid.: 7), becoming yet another actor within the network. Just as the Camino draws on pre-existing infrastructure, this metaphorical frame relies on pre-existing tropes: the pilgrim, here as the Cartesian subject, mediates through his conceptual system.

So far, I have engaged with the substance/appearance divide within a framework of power. Another way in which vanity and commoditization can be included in the religious context while drawing on the concept of agency is through the notion of the 'I' – a prominent feature in modern 'Western' religious conception. New Age Religion is commonly framed as 'self-spirituality' centred around consumption rather than 'restraint' (Bruce 1996; Heelas 1992; Ivakhiv 2003); seeing pilgrimage as a healing practice resonates with such notions. In drawing on embodiment, or the enactment of sacred place in pilgrimage, Ivakhiv (2003) argues against the idea of the Cartesian subject governing New Age conceptions. I have sided with him in analysing the Camino as performed place, but have added a definition of the 'I' (the pilgrim) as *but one* actor in the larger network of relationships.

When talking about the pilgrim 'giving up' agency, of course, we are entering another meta-level of analysis. It is in the pilgrim's own perception that the way walks the body and not the other way around. In line with Sopranzetti's (2017) suggestion, I propose that agency, too, can be written in capital and small letters. But there is yet more to it than that. If ANT has taught us anything, it is the idea that Agency can lie within any kind of subject/object/process, and that all of these are equally relevant. Within this conception, however, we remain enclosed within Agency with a capital 'A', scrutinizing the network of structures and agents from a safe distance. The role of the anthropologist, of course, is to enter that sphere. An emic perspective of agency (in small letters) first of all helps underline the different forms it can take (Abu-Lughod 1990; Mahmood 2004). But the individual is capable of shifting agency around in his conceptual system, which can alter current experience just as much as future behaviour. Attribution theory (Fiske and Taylor 2016; Heider 2013) is built on the simple premise that the causality of events and behaviour can be differently assigned by individuals, both internally within the self and externally to outside forces.

This approach can equally be applied to the Zande (Evans-Pritchard 1991 [1937]) system of post-hoc witchcraft accusations. People attribute agency to their neighbours or different villagers by drawing upon witchcraft as an 'alternative' system of belief. The word 'witchcraft' entails attribution (as a 'control system with negative feedback'; [Douglas 1970]); it is the

process of linking an agent to a circumstance not just in causally opaque circumstances concerning the 'I', but also within the 'I' as an agent itself. In Sepik River society (Harrison 1989), agency is shifted within the I-agent through ritual war magic as a way of 'relieving fighters of accountability for killing'. Spirits take over their bodies, shielding them from the social notion of *mawul*; their 'magically potent alter-ego' is activated and takes over.

The Camino actor network is a combination of these two aspects. First, it 'absorbs' agency within the 'I' itself as a network of multipotent meanings, encompassing a broader self-identity. Second, in pilgrim's everyday language, the Camino has grown into a personified causal entity linked to a variety of events, achievements, etc. Anderson (2006 [1983]) highlights the importance of a common discourse for the creation of imagined communities. Modern nation states, according to him, emerged in context of so-called 'print-capitalism' that unified local dialects into a cohesive language framework. Though on a much smaller scale, such discourse is what unifies people in the spirit of the Camino.

I spent some time with a Romanian-Mauritian pilgrim couple in Galicia. They had reunited recently after she had been walking by herself for the past four weeks. Asked for his reasons for being on the way, he simply declared that this was *her* Camino, not his – he was just supporting her. In such an expression, the Camino is embedded into the self, suddenly encompassing personal biography and imbued with individual meaning. Secondly, the Camino is alluded to as if it was a form of higher power, an external force explaining outside events. In Burgos, as I was talking to one of my informants, a young mother from Belgium, we could not help but overhear a group of Americans at the table next to us having a contemplative discussion on the lessons and meanings of the Camino. She rolled her eyes, mimicking their tone and accent – '*Oh yeah, the Camiiiiino... The Camino here, the Camino there*'. We chuckled. Later that day, as we were waiting at the train station, I asked her for her personal motives for undertaking the journey. She said she had somehow always wanted to go, but it had not worked out, then turned the question to me. I paused. She looked at me, knowingly, and answered for me – 'The Camino just calls you, you know.' In fact, this had not been the first time I had heard this phrase. During one of my first interviews, a French woman had explained: 'I am doing the Camino because...the Camino calls me. At one point, I had absented myself from the Camino for two years... and there were many "signs" – in quotation marks – that brought me back'. When I expressed uncertainty about my motives for the pilgrimage in a different conversation, I got a similar reply – 'The Camino will give you the answer'.

In this article I have presented the Camino as an actor network, an infrastructure engaged with larger hegemonic forces, commoditized in a local-global dialogue, and enacted through the locality/particularity contrast. Academic discourse on the Camino, like many popular narratives, is strongly centred around New Age spirituality and the 'I'. As a result, it is commonly conceptualized as a rite of passage in a person's life, its psychological and medical benefits being highlighted in the sense of physical and mental changes to a 'self'. Although the 'I' is the agent in the process of walking on a material level, it is transcended through semiotic and physical movement. On the basis of attributing agency, the same events and experiences can be interpreted in different ways, eventually resolving the conflicting belief systems into a single network, with attribution as a process mediating between physical entities.

The 'spirit of the Camino' can be classified as a polytropic system of beliefs. Gellner, 2007, n.d.) describes Hindu thinking, with reference to Michaels' (2004) 'identificatory Habitus', as metonymic. If, within such understanding, one thing can stand for another, the question of 'None, one, or many?' can be transcended. Similarly, 'emptying' and 'finding' oneself can represent different manifestations of the same infrastructure of belief. Pilgrims, though differently attributing agency to themselves, to their bodies, to the process of walking, to God or to the Camino, share the same (Camino-) 'substance', that is, an underlying metonymical understanding of each other. Drawing on the ANT framework I have set up, I conclude that the anthropology of pilgrimage can go beyond the New Age pilgrim/tourist debate.

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A STAIN IN THE PICTURE

DEEPAK PRINCE¹

Abstract. This article seeks to examine processes of subjectification as attaching oneself to and making oneself at home in networked technological screens and interfaces, particularly in the concatenated, concretized form of the smartphone. The selfie, as a pre-eminent object of social circulation on screens, provides a point of entry into the problematization of the subject's relationship with the technological screen and interface. Taking as my point of departure an image which depicts the act of clicking a selfie, I examine practices at the edge of interfaces such as 'liking' and 'scrolling'. I use the terms 'technological screen' and 'interface' in a broad sense as referring not just to smartphones, but also to other forms of everyday screens and interfaces, including those which are no longer extant, such as the telegraph key, so as to trace the operation of processes of subjectification in these cases as well. Through a series of anthropological encounters ranging from social situations in the domestic sphere of the home and ordinary social intercourse to larger politicized contexts where questions of nationalism hang in the balance, I examine the conditions that make forceful interruptions of the processes of subjectification possible.

Selfie with a chappal



Screen, Ajmal Shifas, CC BY NC 4.0²

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² Copyright Ajmal Shifas, made available for use under the Creative Commons – Attribution NonCommercial 4.0 International license. The artist has based this sketch on a photograph of unknown copyright. Link to the photograph: <https://perma.cc/6XJ9-6N76> (last accessed 28 May 2020).

In early 2019, a photograph of a group of children pictured in the act of clicking a selfie went ‘viral’ on social media platforms.³ What is striking about the image is that, in his outstretched hand, the boy-photographer is holding not a smartphone with a front-facing camera, but a *chappal*, a piece of footwear. This image of five children – bright eyed, smiles frozen in time, colour on clothes fading, blending like their bare feet into the mud track bordered by houses with rusting metal sheets for fences – invoked a variety of responses on social media. Celebrities from the Bollywood film industry weighed in with how it captured the innocent joy of children who delight in little things against a background of stark material poverty, that it is a lesson for all on how to be happy in any given circumstance. Others saw it as a sign of the failed promises of a depraved modernity, which, even as it puts high-end smartphones and fashionable accessories in the hands of some, leaves several others on dusty roads with footwear for selfie-cameras. A few questioned the authenticity of the image, wondering if it had been photoshopped.

However, what left no one who commented on the image in any doubt was the fact that the photograph depicted the act of clicking a selfie – a ubiquitous, everyday practice of ‘smartphone culture’.

The sociality of the selfie

One way into this image is to see it as parody, as mischievous mimicry of a narcissistic adult practice, narcissism being one of the most common characterizations of the practice of clicking selfies. Marwick (2015) argues that selfies on social media platforms such as Instagram serve as vehicles of ‘microcelebrity’ status, being deployed as a strategy of self-presentation that mobilizes exhibitionism and narcissism through the constant production and circulation of self-images in an economy of attention, supported by a culture of conspicuous consumption. Another interpretation is to consider the image as picturing children playing a game. Roland Barthes (1982), following the French tradition of the critique of modern children’s games, suggests that the toys children play with are

³ Virality can be thought of as an amplification of what is known as word-of-mouth enabled by the ‘network effects’ of communications technology. My usage of the word ‘viral’ here, however, comes from how the image’s circulation has been described on social media and in news media articles, as in this article: <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/entertainment-news-with-this-viral-picture-bollywood-stars-have-become-fans-of-these-kids/324939> (last accessed 28 May 2020).

invocations of objects and practices from the adult world that use the institution of play to indoctrinate the child into a grown-up world of class and the division of labour. Thus, a child with a toy stethoscope, earpieces attached to a colourful rubber cord, engages in an examination of another child who is lying down flat, invoking the clinical body under the doctor's gaze. The game played with the chappal-camera can be seen as an invocation of the transactions of a self-image or as the specular image of one's bodily person on social media screens, a practice that Frosh (2015) characterizes as central to 'phatic' sociality. For Frosh the selfie is a 'gestural utterance', the function of which is to produce and sustain sociality. He draws on Malinowski's notion of phatic communion, a type of utterance which is not so much a vehicle of meaning as an acting out of 'ties of union' in expressions such as 'How is it going?' (Malinowski 1923). Erving Goffman (1955) posited a notion of the face not as a self-image taken in the photographic sense, but as an idea of self that emerges in interaction against a grid of socially determined value. In phrases such as 'loss of face' or 'to save face', what is at stake, as is well understood, is the value of the self-image in specific social situations. Goffman coined the term 'face-work' to indicate actions, intentional or otherwise, taken to establish and stabilize socialized self-value in the flux of interaction. Face-work for Goffman is a social skill, one that is ritualized in social interaction. Putting on a brave face, maintaining poise and keeping a straight face are all different types of face-work undertaken in appropriate circumstances in order to accrue self-value. Frosh's characterization of the selfie as 'a visible vehicle for sociable communication' coincides with the selfie understood as a form of face-work, albeit extended over networked technology. Marwick's argument, that the strategic posting of selfies on Instagram is oriented towards status as a micro-celebrity, also bears traces of the selfie considered as a form of face-work as Goffman characterizes it.

I present Frosh's and Marwick's expositions on the selfie here as representative of two broad themes in the sociological study of this ubiquitous practice involving smartphones, leaving aside for the moment psychological perspectives that foreground pathological narcissism and addiction. First, the selfie is employed in the service of accruing self-value in an economy of attention. Secondly, it is a gesture of sociability akin to nodding at social others or engaging in a brief exchange of pleasantries, a part of everyday sociality, albeit one made possible by the Internet and the technological interface of the smartphone,

transacting one's self-image on screen. Goffman's notion of face-work allows both of these characterizations to be grounded in dynamic social processes that are constitutive of self-value through strategic negotiations of encounters. However, before one heads out into the world of social interactions – the world in which sociality is staged for Goffman – one spends time in front of the mirror, 'setting one's face', perhaps even taking some *enjoyment* in doing so. This can, no doubt, be considered preparation for impending encounters in the social world, a warm-up drill for real face-work, perhaps. But the enjoyment, or calming, uplifting aspect of this practice suggests that something else is at work here other than a preparation for strategic transactions of one's self-image in the service of face-work. There is a process of composing or constructing the material face going on here from which one may derive enjoyment or, on certain days, displeasure.

I would like to suggest that the photograph of the chappal selfie brings to light another aspect, one that is not contained in the contents of the image and the meanings it evokes – a function that is elusive, yet crucial to the relationship between visibility and the subject. What I am speaking of pervades the atmosphere of visibility that the photographic picture is immersed in, which, drawing on Jacques Lacan's eleventh seminar, we can call the look or, to follow the conventional English translation of the French *regard*, the gaze. Since Sartre's problematization of the gaze as the look of a subjective other that surprises and threatens to annihilate the subject who comes under the gaze, the concept has opened up a study of a range of problems related to power. Laura Mulvey (1975), drawing on Freud's conception of scopophilia (*Schaulust*), shows how the phantastic construction of the woman-image under a male gaze constitutes the libidinal motor of cinema (Mulvey 1975). The gaze for Mulvey determines the scopic subjection of women pictured under what she calls a 'phallogocentric' regime of visual pleasure.

Michel Foucault also characterizes the gaze, in three different senses. First, the disciplined gaze of the knowing subject, 'the eye that knows and decides, the eye that governs' (Foucault 2003: 89), is central to the production of knowledge through the disciplining of perception, which renders things seen and transparent, thus allowing them

to translate themselves into language.⁴ Elsewhere, secondly, Foucault suggests that the gaze is mobilized as an instrument in apparatuses of power: the panopticon is a prison-machine, a ‘perfect disciplinary apparatus’ which made possible ‘a single gaze to see everything constantly ... a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned’ (Foucault 1995: 173). And thirdly for Foucault, ‘turning the gaze on oneself’ is a practice central to what he outlines as the ethical project of the care of the self, or techniques of subjectification.⁵

For Mulvey and Foucault, therefore, at least in the latter’s first two characterizations, the gaze, considered as objective structure in a matrix of relations of power, is foregrounded. The anthropologist Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, who studied photographs published in the *National Geographic* magazine, suggest that photographs may be studied in the way Lacan’s treats paintings, that is, in the function of pacifying the gaze of the observer. ‘[W]hat is pacified is the gaze, or rather the anxiety that emerges from the gap between the imagined ideal and the encounter with the real’ (Lutz and Collins 1991: 136). The authors deconstruct the ‘multitude of gazes’ – of the photographer, the photographic subject, the magazine editor, the reader etc. – each ‘gaze’ suggesting a different way of looking at the image. Entangled within this intersecting field of gazes, they show how ‘very contemporary stories of contestable power are told’ (ibid.: 146). The art historian James Elkins tells us that ‘Lacan’s seminar on the gaze is like a deep well for visual theory: people draw on it, but no one really knows what is down there’ (Elkins 2007). It is therefore with caution that I proceed to draw out what I find to be of interest in Lacan’s discourse on the gaze as the object cause of desire.

Of the gaze and the subject’s attachment to a picture

In his study of the gaze, Lacan insists from the outset on the fact that the function of the eye as an organ of sight must be distinguished from the function of the gaze. An instantiation of this distinction between the eye and the gaze can be seen in D.H.

⁴ ‘The gaze saw sovereignty in a world of language whose clear speech it gathered up effortlessly in order to restore it in a secondary, identical speech: given by the visible, this speech, without changing anything, made it possible to see’ (Foucault 2003: 117).

⁵ This third characterization of the gaze is treated extensively in his College de France lectures of 1981-82 on the hermeneutics of the self.

Lawrence's essay 'Art and Morality', one of the earliest critiques of photographic realism that takes as its subject the moral outrage caused by Cezanne's painting of apples. Lawrence suggests that Cezanne's paintings show something that violates the normative visual regime of the day, which was dominated by a photographic realism, the symbol of which was Kodak. Cezanne, says Lawrence, 'begins to see more than the all-seeing eye of humanity can possibly see, kodak-wise'. Cezanne's intervention calls on us to 'see in the apple the bellyache, Sir Isaac's knock on the cranium, the vast moist wall through which the insect bores to lay her eggs in the middle, and the untasted, unknown quality which Eve saw hanging on a tree' (Lawrence 1925: 684). While the eye sees before it a painted apple, it is the gaze that distributes it over a space of encounters within which it acquires significance, this being what constitutes the force of a Cezanne painting according to Lawrence. For Lacan, on the other hand, the gaze is central to the regulation of the encounter between the subject of desire, as one who *wants to see*, and the world of visibilities or appearances. It operates in a field that is distinct from that of the 'geometral' understanding of light and also from realist conceptions of visuality, as in the physics of optics, or in perspectival graphics where the image of an object traverses a straight line to the vanishing point of the disembodied, disinterested eye of the observer. The gaze has a double aspect – a function of looking and, importantly, a function of showing⁶. Lacan indicates that the 'looking' function of the gaze elides its other function, that 'it shows': a gleam draws a quick glance, a picture captivates the eye that wants to see, dream images carry along the dreamer who sees not where it leads. The gaze is central to the apparatus of visibilization.⁶ Unlike the disembodied, disinvested eye of a scientific observer who sees 'what is out there',⁷ the subject of desire sees, or rather is *shown* a picture that bears a relation to what it wants to see. Here Lacan departs from his earlier characterization of the

⁶ The gaze, says Lacan, is 'the instrument through which light is embodied and through which... I am photo-graphed... I enter light [under a gaze]' (Lacan 1977: 106).

⁷ The physicist Arthur Stanley Eddington, known for his experimental validation of Einstein's theory, provides a rather extreme characterization of the scientific observer and the observing eye. The observer, writes Eddington, 'can do without taste, smell, hearing, and even touch. We must keep our eyes – or rather one eye.... [I]n 1915 Einstein made another raid on [the observers'] sensory equipment. He removed all the retina of the eye except one small patch. The observer could no longer recognise form or extension in the external world, but he could tell whether two things were in apparent coincidence or not'. This mutilation, he suggests, would keep the observers from quarrelling with each other. 'We perform the experiments and let him keep watch... [A]ll our knowledge of the external world as it is conceived to-day in physics can be demonstrated to him. If we cannot convince *him* we have no right to assert it' (Eddington 1947: 12-13).

subject's relationship with the mirror image – the misrecognized identification of the mirror image with an ideal-ego – a dynamic he refers to here as an initial 'moment of seeing', an 'identificatory haste' on the part of the subject (Lacan 1977: 114-17). The correlate of the gaze, for Lacan, is the picture.⁸ W.J.T. Mitchell, in a book provocatively titled *What do pictures want?*, suggests that pictures are animistic, personological: 'They present not just a surface but a *face* that faces the beholder' (Mitchell 2005: 30). Echoing Lacan's characterization of the 'voracious appetite of the eye', Mitchell suggests that 'we do not merely "see" pictures, we "drink" in their images with our eyes ... but images are also, notoriously, a drink that fails to satisfy our thirst. Their main function is to awaken desire; *to create, not gratify* thirst' (ibid.: 80, emphasis added). Mitchell then suggests that pictures too, like people, do not know what they want and that they must be assisted, through a process of dialogue, to express this latent desire. He thus sets himself up as an analyst of the picture in so far as the picture itself is the subject of desire (the picture is an 'I'). Here Mitchell reverses Lacan's formula – 'I am a picture' under a gaze. And what this analysis might uncover, Mitchell speculates, is that 'what pictures want in the last instance is simply to be asked what they want, with the understanding that the answer may well be, nothing at all' (ibid.: 48).

Leaving the interpretation and ventriloquism of the picture's desire to the art historian, I return at this point to the discussion of the picture and its relationship to the subject and the gaze in Lacan's seminar. The picture for Lacan is a *showing*.⁹ Under a gaze, 'I see myself seeing myself' can be understood not as a subject *identifying* with oneself in an indifferent reflexive gaze doubled back upon itself; rather, it is the gaze of the subject of desire – *I see myself in so far as I am a picture, offered for the satisfaction of eyes which*

⁸ Foucault too situates the disciplinary gaze in relation to the picture, but picture understood as a structure integrating the visible at the level of the surface of the body under examination and the legible – the 'language of the disease' that the disciplined clinician hears. The role of the picture for Foucault 'is to divide up the visible within an already given *conceptual* configuration' (2003: 112-13, emphasis added). This is unlike Lacan, who situates the gaze in the terrain of desire and sees the picture as the mapping of a subject sustaining a function of desire. .

⁹ Although Lacan develops these ideas by drawing on Freud's account of a father's dream from the seventh chapter of *The interpretation of dreams*, the notion of the subject mapping himself in a picture of desire can also be seen in Freud's essay on screen memories: 'In the majority of... childhood scenes the subject sees himself in the recollection as a child, with the knowledge that this child is himself; he sees this child, however, as an observer from outside the scene would see him... Now it is evident that such a picture cannot be an exact repetition of the impression that was originally received. For the subject was then in the middle of the situation and was attending not to himself but to the external world' (Freud 1962: 321).

want to see. Lacan suggests that the subject is suspended in the vacillation of the gaze captivated by the picture in a function of desire. This middle space of the subject's suspension within a process of desire that composes or brings to view a picture of desire he calls 'the screen'. And the trace of the subject marked on the picture is characterized as a 'stain'. The French term *la tache* is translated as 'stain' or 'spot'. But Lacan's penchant for puns suggests another sense for the reader – *l'attache*, a clip or fastener that connects or attaches. What is attached? In Lacan's schema, it is the impossible suture of the subject as split, suspended from the object cause of desire, the cause of the subject's incompleteness and also of desire, whose locus the subject is bound to follow, suspended from the point of the stain.

Drawing to a close this rather ungainly detour through the terrain of desire on to which we find ourselves displaced by Lacan's discussion of the gaze, I return at this point to the photograph of the chappal selfie. The fascination that this image holds for us as viewers lies not in the fact that we can *identify* ourselves with the visible form of the happy children in the image, as little homunculi, petit ego-ideals. In fact, the comments in response to the image that I highlighted earlier mark the insurmountable distance or separation of the viewers from the children in the picture, either in the direction of a happiness one finds oneself excluded from, or in the sense of a poverty that is far away from the bourgeois comforts of the technophilic fans of Bollywood cinema. I suggest that the photograph of the chappal selfie presents us with a picture that embodies and exposes the circulation of looks, the map of desire in the practice of clicking a selfie, an everyday practice in the social life of smartphones, a process within which viewers of the chappal-selfie situate themselves as they populate the picture, seeking to find a place within it. Under a look that comes from outside, we turn ourselves into a picture, one that is offered for the satisfaction of eyes that want to see through the mediation of a screen from which we are suspended as subjects. And in the photograph of the children and their chappal selfie, if indeed we see something of ourselves in the picture – caught in the act, as it were, as subjects of desire – it is on the screen, in the form of stains on the sole of the chappal. It is on the other side of the chappal, the side facing the children that is not shown in the photograph, the side that would be composed of a smartphone screen for the usual selfie; the side in which the viewers of the image situate themselves by a leap of imagination when they comment on

the picture, seeing in it a picture of simple joy or the sadness of poverty, both of which they find themselves *excluded* from. It is in this sense that I suggest that the photograph of the children with the chappal is an excellent critique of the selfie, in so far as it exposes the ‘stain’ – the point of attachment of the subject mapping itself in a picture of desire in the act of clicking a selfie.

The argument I wish to trace here is that the selfie is not just a misrecognized identification with one’s idealized self-image, not just a strategic or ‘phatic’ transaction of a self-image; it is a way of turning oneself into a picture of desire that circulates in a field of looks, offering satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) *to eyes that want to see*, attached to the picture at the point of a stain. Very often, the picture is not satisfying to the eye – what one is shown on screen is not what one wishes to see – and anyone who has posted selfies on social media with any seriousness knows the number of deletions, the number of tries it takes to get it right, to find a satisfying shot, a practice not very different from fixing and re-fixing one’s hair in front of a mirror, trying out smiles and other expressions, perhaps even catching a glimpse of oneself as a ridiculous stain on the mirror, eliciting a smile from nowhere that charms us in its sudden appearance. And to comment on the picture, to find in the picture a subjective hold, one’s desire hangs on the point of a vulnerable attachment, the stain.

The atmospheric gaze

I would like to demonstrate, through two encounters, that the gazes that come from the outside are not just those of the individuals with whom the self-image is transacted, it is impersonal and imaginary (or more appropriately, *imagined*). In the company of some hometown friends and their family I went on a tour of temples, at the end of which a visit to a nearby hill-station was also planned. Before heading up to the hills, we stopped at a temple in the South Indian town of Namakkal, Tamil Nadu, the final one on the itinerary. Anjaneya or Hanuman, the monkey-faced God, was the presiding deity. One of my friends, holding his young son in his arms, turned away from the almost twenty-foot-tall monolithic idol, framed it on his smartphone screen and clicked a selfie. A priest came over to him, none too pleased, and asked him to delete it. The temple was no place to click a selfie. ‘The place of Darshan (literally, the Gaze of God) is not where you fool around. What are you

teaching your son?’ My friend told him that his mother, who couldn’t make it to the temple, would be pleased to see her young grandson blessed by the Lord, and, pleading the understanding of the priest, he managed to hang on to the photo.

Following this incident, we proceeded up the Kolli Hills *ghat* road. It was a steep climb, involving the negotiation of hairpin bends, and not everyone travelling in the party was comfortable with the ride. On the way, we decided to stop at what a taxi driver in Namakkal told us was a good ‘selfie point’. He had shown us the location on Google maps. Approaching the spot, however, we found it to be too crowded and stopped a kilometre ahead, where the road was wide enough to let other vehicles pass. I was stretching my cramped legs, relieved of the weight of my friend’s son. My friends were already clicking selfies, in groups and individually, their backs turned to the breath-taking view of the valley, hills part hidden by wisps of mist rolling away into the plains in waves of green. A motor-cycle rider, coming up slowly towards us, stopped beside the car. He introduced himself as a ‘local’¹⁰ and asked us where we were staying in the Kolli Hills. I answered evasively. ‘You shouldn’t stand here. It’s not a good place’, and pointing to the side of the hill-face he said: ‘Last week, a huge rock tumbled down from there. Young people just like you were standing here taking photos. They didn’t even have time to react, but thankfully the rock missed them. Their car, however, was crushed.’ To our plains-people’s eye the hill-face seemed intact, but the warning got to us. We climbed into the car and went on our way. What struck me in both these incidents was the invocation of a gaze which seemingly loomed over us from outside, a gaze not belonging to an individual, an impersonal gaze which nevertheless invokes a personality – a divinity spoken for by the priest in the case of the temple, and something like the unpredictable mood or spirit of the hilly rock-face alluded to by the local man on the motorbike. Both cases invoked a gaze that marked a threat, that sought to prevent the composition and happy transaction of a picture, a gaze that foreshadowed an impending unwelcome encounter threatening the imminent elimination of the subject, like removing a stain from an otherwise unblemished harmonious surface. In the genre of the selfie photograph is a grim category – a selfie which

¹⁰ In Tamil Nadu a particular form of social difference is produced, especially in places of tourism, between someone who is ‘local’, of the area, and someone who is ‘out-station’, coming from elsewhere, possibly by rail or bus, a mutation derived from the notion of belonging to an *ur*, a home village or town with which one is identified. See Daniel’s *Fluid Signs* (1984) for a canonical account of the *ur*.

results not in the happy transaction of a picture of oneself offered to satisfy the viewer's eye, but one that ends in a *dustuchia*, an unhappy encounter marked by a gaze from beyond which threatens to interrupt, to eliminate a subject mapping itself in a picture of desire: I speak of selfie-deaths.

Repetition and territorialisation at the edge of the interface

Turning now to face the screen from the other side of the transaction, we can say that the 'social life' of selfies is for the most part sustained at the edge of the interface on social media screens. Frosh suggests that practices at the interface, such as clicks (on the 'like' button, for instance) and swipes (to scroll down the screen) etc., involve a sensorimotor reflex which is habitual. According to Wirth, 'Users are invited by the structure of the user interface as well as by the feedback of the community to post again and again, to like, to comment on pictures, and to comment on comments.' Both these accounts, while coming from opposed points of view with regard to agency (the former from the side of habitual reflex coded in the body of the person, the latter from the side of the interface that elicits a habituated response), characterize the mechanical dimension of the transaction. What is involved in a transaction at the interface, I suggest, is an evaluation of a different order from the mechanistic and the behavioural. Interfacial practices such as swiping up on vertically scrolled screens (as in the Facebook newsfeed, the core operation involved in the processing or transaction of a social media post) are better understood through the notion of *Wiederholenzwang*, a repetition that becomes automatic, compulsive. Breaking into the etymology of Freud's German expression *Wiederholen*, Lacan suggests that the verb *holen* bears connotations of 'hauling', a tiresome and exhausting activity that carries the seed of interruption within itself. Very often, having fallen into a reverie of scrolling, the lifting of one's head away from absorption by the screen is experienced as an exhaustion, in the sense of both a tiredness and of having been completely used up, when the interface itself announces 'You are all caught up', or when the scrolling hits rock bottom on the screen, refusing to move further. But that is not all. 'Repetition', warns Lacan, 'is not reproduction'. Repetition is the repetition of a missed encounter, a *seeking of the new* – not this post, not that one either, not the next one (Lacan 1977: 50-64).

However, there is more to scrolling, clicking and other practices at the interface than the compulsion to repeat. These practices are also rhythmic, pulsatile and *expressive*, in that sense being close to what Deleuze and Guattari characterize as the ‘refrain’ or *ritornello*, the rhythmic tune that marks out a *territory*. Thus a child hums to calm himself in the dark, or while doing homework, or while setting off from home on an exploratory amble, constituting a little territory which serves as a base.¹¹

The notion of territoriality and its relation to the subject is not foreign to sociology. Erving Goffman, like Deleuze and Guattari, draws on animal ethology to conceptualize what he calls ‘territories of the self’, that is, territory conceived as that upon which a claim is staked, ‘an entitlement to possess, control use or dispose’. This claim on a piece of territory is distinct from the juridical notion of ownership of property. What is at stake, says Goffman, is the ‘exertion of current, not ultimate control’.¹² Such territorial claims are articulated not just in the context of one’s home or dwelling, but also in a variety of situations involving ‘temporary tenancy’ – park benches, restaurant tables, queues, train cars etc. For Goffman, territorial claims are strategic practices of space-making marked by a ‘socially determined variability’ (space understood here as in the expression ‘I need my space’).

Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, are interested in the notion of territory understood not as a subject’s possessive claim extended over space, but as a transformative intensification of space constituted through an *expressive* act. ‘The expressive is primary in relation to the possessive; expressive qualities ... are necessarily appropriative’. Such expressive qualities are signatures, signature being understood here not as an ‘indication

¹¹ Lacan develops his notion of repetition from a reading of Freud’s presentation of the game played by his grandson, the famous ‘Fort-da’. Deleuze and Guattari argue that ‘Psychoanalysts deal with the Fort-Da very poorly when they treat it as a phonological opposition or a symbolic component of the language-unconscious, when it is in fact a refrain... Tra la la’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 349). Incidentally, Edgar Allen Poe, in an essay on the principles of poetic composition, describes the process of settling down on the refrain for his poem the raven: ‘Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the refrain itself should be brief’ – a single word would make the best refrain. Next, determining that the sound of the word must carry force, he was led to ‘the long O ... the most sonorous vowel’. Finally, wanting a word embodying this sound to carry a forceful melancholy, it was now ‘impossible to overlook the word Nevermore’ (Poe 1846). Recall that Freud also goes on a similar journey of incantation – going from Oooo and Aaaa to Fort-Da. Hence Deleuze and Guattari’s appeal to move away from the register of the symbolic and language to lay stress instead on the original, *expressive* quality of the sound in the utterance of the child, a quality which Poe in his essay also notes as central to the refrain.

¹² Goffman 1997: 53-54; see also *ibid.*, footnote 14.

of a person [but] a chancy formation of a domain'. These expressive qualities are not the possessions of the subject, 'they delineate a territory that will belong to the subject that carries or produces them'. The refrain or *ritornello* for Deleuze and Guattari is a 'territory-producing expressiveness' (1987: 315-16). On a tiring day I unlock the door to my room and find my spot on the bed, but not before turning on my usual lamp and ensuring that the fan is running at its usual speed, as showing on the regulator – these are 'territory-producing' expressive acts or *ritornellos* articulated at the edge of interfaces – electrical switches in this case – that territorialize the interior space of the house. It is this quality of an expressive territoriality that allows for the emergence of what Sherry Turkle (2011) calls 'Life on screen', understood not as a life distinct from so-called 'RL' or real-life (which is how Turkle characterizes it), but as a screenal territoriality cut out at the edge of the interface. Clicking, scrolling and swiping at the edge of the smartphone interface, in so far as their expressiveness cuts out a space into which one disappears, are acts of territory-production in the everyday.¹³ *Ritornellos*, in so far as they are territory-producing expressive qualities, are immanent in the work of inhabitation. The visual layout of interfacial features, like commercial jingles that get stuck in the head as earworms, constitute a frame around which users' practices of territorialization coalesce. The sense of unmooring felt by users when a familiar interface is altered drastically – such as the transformation of the Gmail interface from its earlier 'classic' version to the current form, or when Facebook first introduced newsfeed, replacing its earlier profile-based display – is experienced as an unwelcome scrambling of one's territorial coordinates. It is as if a stranger had slipped into one's home and rearranged every object and rewired most switches – familiar gestures no longer find purchase, they don't have the same effect on the usual zones of the screen. New practices must be learnt, and the screen must be territorialized all over again by a subject in order to keep pace with technological transformation.

The smartphone, ever at arm's reach for the urban commuter circulating through the city, provides material support for territorialization-on-the-go. On the Delhi metro-rail, for

¹³ I adopt Veena Das' presentation of the everyday here. The everyday for Das is a site not just of habits or conventions; it is also dogged by skepticism and doubt which threatens the ordinary from 'within the weave of the everyday life'. It is from within such a site that we can grasp the 'fragility of the subject and of the context as mutually constitutive of the work of inhabitation' (Das 2014: 279-81).

instance, one of the first actions a person performs upon entering a compartment, crowded though it may be, is to whip out the phone, plug in the ear phone and fall into the luminous embrace of a screen-territory, cut out and stabilized by little rhythmic, punctiform gestures at the edge of the interface. Sometimes an outsider is permitted into the territory, when, for instance, a friend leans over to look at the screen. I have found myself next to commuters watching a sports game or a comedy show with volume on loud, and my eyes have fallen on to the screen, perched atop the ephemeral borders of a territory, turning away when an interfacial act such as changing to personal chat transforms the contours of the territory as it closes around the privacy of the person at the interface. On rare occasions the person holding the phone and I have found ourselves simultaneously lifting our faces away from the screen towards each other, exchanging a half-comfortable expression of acknowledgement, of having shared something. I understand that I am operating in the grey zone of ethics here, perhaps bordering on the black zone, an ethics not of an invasion of privacy understood in the sense of property rights, but of a scopic intrusion into a picture-territory in which a subject is mapped in a function of desire.

However, this question of ethics is not just one of civility in public space, it also raises a question concerning the epistemological ethics of the disciplinary practice of anthropology, which, following Malinowski's pioneering work in the Trobriand Islands, has at its core the practice of participant observation. In so far as the anthropologist as observer occupies the field of the gaze, he is already caught up in participation, for this is what we can draw from Lacan's seminar on the gaze – to observe is to participate (for the gaze has an effect), and one participates in so far as one is observed oneself (the anthropologist turns himself into a picture in the field of the gaze). The gaze of the anthropologist is not just a disciplined gaze in the sense invoked by Foucault in relation to clinical practice: it situates the anthropologist as a subject of desire, as a subject who, in the act of looking, expresses his or her *wanting* to know. And the anthropologist, as a living picture of one-who-wants-to-know for the sake of knowing itself, very often presents a ridiculous, comical figure to those in the field, as someone who is out of place, a stain on the social scene.

Attachment and territorialization on imagined screens and interfaces past

On our return from the trip to the hills I described earlier, we stopped by a fruit vendor, drawn to the glow of the guavas on display. There was an argument going on: one of the customers felt he was being cheated by the shopkeeper. The customer claimed, and proved, that the shopkeeper had lied about the quantity of guavas he was being charged for. The weighing machine, as is now standard, had two numerical screens – one facing the shopkeeper, the other turned towards the customer. However, on this machine the display turned towards the customer was not functioning. The shopkeeper, with an expression of annoyance masking his public shaming, said he had misread the screen and proceeded to balance out the transaction to the correct weight. It was the customer's parting retort that caught my attention because, through his imagination, he had extended the signifying horizon of the numerical display screen: 'What do you see on that screen in front of you? The customer's face with the word "fool" written on the forehead?' The transaction occurs in the space of a territory which, for it to be ethical, has to be a shared territory in which the gaze of the shopkeeper and customer can meet as equals on the two screens. It is precisely the breakdown of this ethic, marked by a shifting balance in power, a power constituted upon the visibility that the customer was pointing to in his parting remark, that, by expanding a numerical screen into a broader imaginary surface, acts as the basis for the disagreement to be imagined and articulated. It called to mind a converse situation, the decision of many young people I know of who, deciding they didn't want their social media posts to be seen by certain members of the family or other acquaintances whose gaze would invite the unwanted exercise of power, either blocked them or created a separate circulation for their posts. When my bag has been held up in the X-ray scanner in metro stations, I have occasionally peered behind the X-ray screen to see whether it was my bag that was holding up the transaction at the checkpoint, much to the consternation of the officer there. Here again a screenal boundary is crossed that introduces a gaze that threatens the balance of power. The experience of anxiety when a traffic policeman stops a rider, demands a photo ID card and wanders off with it to the sergeant sitting in the police jeep is due to this same breach of territoriality, one that threatens the subject sustaining himself in the flimsy margins of a territory that is easily ruptured. This is all the more amplified in the structural anonymity of online or CCTV camera surveillance, where the subject as the subject of an

image or data is split from the body of the person and circulates under a surveilling gaze which may be non-human, a computer algorithm.

Thus far, I have tried to produce a characterization of the subject's relation to the technological screen as an attachment suspended by the point of a stain on circulating objects, particularly images. The subject's relation to the interface has been characterized as not just a repetition, but as expressive acts constitutive of a territory that the subject comes to occupy. I have drawn on psychoanalysis for these characterizations because the discipline, in its preoccupation with unconscious, imaginary investments, has developed powerful ways of understanding the object relations that anthropology can draw on. I have tried to situate the problem in certain ethnographic instances that demonstrate the position of the smartphone as a concatenation of the technological screen and the interface in a set of ordinary, though not altogether normative social situations. I would now like to provide a short account of the nineteenth-century technology of Morse telegraphs to elucidate this dynamic of attachment and territorialization as a characteristic of screens and interfaces.

The Morse code, as telegraphers well know, is best read by *ear*: that is, rather than translate the code into text on paper or read the visualised waveforms of the electric pulses, telegraph operators found it much easier to translate the *sound* as they heard it. In a now unclassified US War Office training video on hand-sending techniques, the instructor insists that a novice signalman ought to take the musical and rhythmic aspects of the sound of the signal sent and received on the telegraph as a guide to understanding and working with the code.¹⁴ Taking the letter 'H' as an example, represented in Morse code by four dots: *di-di-di-dit*, the instructor says a well-sent 'H' will sound like a horse at the gallop. He suggests listening to the code one sends, recorded on tape, in order to evaluate and improve on the sending technique. This playful and humorous video concludes with a sender transmitting 'Vs': *di-di-di-dah*, standing for Victory, which, sent by an expert signalman, sounds like an electronic fanfare.

In a letter to his friend and long-time collaborator, Dr Leonard Gale, Samuel Morse, inventor of the Morse code and the Morse telegraphic apparatus (along with Alfred Vail, his chief engineer) recounts an incident from around 1846, one that Morse 'had specially treasured in his memory and *frequently* related as illustrative of the practicality of reading

¹⁴ TF-11 3697 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQj74Y2H8xQ> accessed 21 May 2020.

by sound'. The telegraphic line was in the process of being extended from Philadelphia to Washington via an intermediate waystation at Wilmington, Delaware. Morse, then Inspector of Telegraphs, was in the operating room of the Washington office seated beside the operator, a Mr Washington. Morse writes:

The instruments were for a moment silent. I was conversing with Mr. Washington, the operator... Presently one of the instruments commenced writing and Mr. Washington listened and smiled. I asked him why he smiled. 'Oh!' said he, 'that is Zantzinger of the Philadelphia office, but he is operating from Wilmington.' 'How do you know that?' 'Oh! I know his touch, but I must ask him why he is in Wilmington.' He then went to the instrument and telegraphed to Zantzinger at Wilmington, and the reply was that he had been sent from Philadelphia to regulate the relay magnet for the Wilmington operator, who was inexperienced.¹⁵

Morse registers his amazement at how the operator, Mr Washington, merely by listening to the coded signal, was able to deduce who it was that had sent it. It was as if Mr Washington was privy to an *auditory screen* that was not available to Morse, on which he 'read' details that Morse was completely unaware of. The inventor of the apparatus and creator of the code found himself unable to construct the auditory screen generated in the active imagination of the telegraph operator! Among telegraphers, the 'fist', or what is here referred as the 'touch', denotes a unique signature,¹⁶ a peculiar rhythmic quality that constitutes the mark of every good hand-sender in the operation of the telegraph key interface. Here again we see the two characteristics outlined above: a subjectivity attached, suspended from the screen, an imagined *auditory* screen; and a subjectivity territorializing the signal through a signature rhythm at the interface of the telegraph key.

Interrupt

The relationship of the subject to the screen and the interface may be sundered at the point of attachment and the possibility of territorialization interrupted. On certain evenings in Bangalore, where I spent a few months doing fieldwork, I would hang out at my friend Ramu's godown, a warehouse where coconuts were stocked and sorted by size. One evening I noticed that Suka, my friend's only employee, wasn't around, although he usually sits there at this time, dehusking the coconuts and weighing them for the next days' orders,

¹⁵ Letter to Dr Gale dated 10 May 1869, reproduced in Morse 1914: 480.

¹⁶ A territorializing *ritornello*, in the language of Deleuze and Guattari.

while Ramu went over the day's accounts. I asked my friend where he was. 'That guy is crazy. He disappears sometimes.' I nodded, as if I understood. Ramu went on, 'Last week, I bought him a new phone. You remember, his phone had died after the rains?' Again I nodded. It was a feature phone with a physical keypad and small colour screen, not a touchscreen smartphone. I remembered Suka being very upset the day the phone died. He liked that phone. Ramu went on, 'He wanted one identical to his old one. He was used to the display options in the old phone's menu screen. I searched everywhere online, and it looked like that model is no longer in production. I got him a newer model of the same brand. He booted it up. The screen flashed. I thought he would be happy. He fiddled around with it for a while, frowning. Then, he bent down, picked up the rod he uses for dehusking the coconut and smashed the phone with it. I was shocked and asked him why he did it. He said the screen was showing wrong things. He couldn't comprehend the new user interface and menu items. He wanted a phone identical to the model of the old phone and said he didn't mind the money being deducted from his salary. This time I checked second-hand websites and managed to find one'. Suka, who couldn't read English, reacted to the screen on the new phone as something foreign, an interface with which he couldn't find purchase, making him feel unhomey on a screen that used to be familiar. His rather extreme reaction may seem shocking. But we see this in various degrees of emphasis, in situations where this ephemeral attachment of almost hypnotic suspension from the screen is interrupted. This might happen when the power goes off while watching a film, or someone switches channels while someone else is absorbed in the programme on screen, or when the Internet connection slows down, causing much irritation to someone who is thrown out of a territorial ensconcement at the edge of the interface. One only has to see the distress and explosion of force in a genre of YouTube video: 'Angry parents destroying video game consoles'. The videos feature enraged parents from around the world, unable to prevent their children's absorption into the territory of the video game screen, destroying the video game console and its display screen, hurling it against the ground or smashing it with a hammer. Such force is the brutal reminder of the ephemerality of the psychic thread of attachment by which is suspended the subject of the screen, whose territorialization at the edge of the interface may be interrupted when such force is brought to bear.

In March 2015, Instagram took down a photograph uploaded by Rupi Kaur, a poet and visual artist who publishes much of her work on this social media platform. Central to the photograph and its contentious removal was a stain. The picture depicts a woman lying on her side, facing away from the camera, a red stain on her pants and a red spot mirrored on the surface of the bedspread. Kaur had received a message from Instagram which notified her that the post had been removed because ‘it does not follow community guidelines’. Kaur posted a screenshot of this message too. The original photo was part of a project for a course on visual rhetoric exploring the taboos around menstruation. Following the take-down, Kaur wrote on Facebook:

thank you @instagram for providing me with the exact response my work was created to critique. you deleted a photo of a woman who is fully covered and menstruating stating that it goes against community guidelines when your guidelines outline that it is nothing but acceptable. the girl is fully clothed. the photo is mine. it is not attacking a certain group. nor is it spam. and because it does not break those guidelines i will repost it again.¹⁷

This post garnered over fifty thousand likes and was shared over ten thousand times. The censored post was briefly restored by Instagram, with a message of apology from the ‘community operations’ team: ‘A member of our team accidentally removed something you posted on Instagram. This was a mistake, and we sincerely apologize for this error’.¹⁸ The politicization of this post was not due to policing by algorithms alone, for posts frequently get taken down (and restored, upon appeal) following ‘content moderation’. Kaur’s contention was that this image, which did not violate the platform’s terms of use, was removed solely in order to wipe the stain off the picture, as it were – a misogynistic act by an organization which claims that its platform is built on liberal values. It is around the stain that the collective subjectivity of women is summoned to populate the picture, investing it with a power that forces Instagram to roll back the erasure of the bloodstained photograph.

¹⁷ The post concludes with a political statement: ‘i will not apologize for not feeding the ego and pride of misogynist society that will have my body in an underwear but not be okay with a small leak. when your pages are filled with countless photos/accounts where women (so many who are underage) are objectified. pornified. and treated less than human. thank you’. This post was later re-instated by Instagram. See, for the original post, <https://www.instagram.com/p/OovWwJHA6f/>, accessed 21 May 2020.

¹⁸ See also <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/instagram-deletes-womans-period-photos-but-her-response-is-amazing/>, accessed 21 May 2020.

Under a machinic gaze, the face is an interface

The terrain of circulation in social media involves not just people socializing at the edge of interfaces, it also involves a lot of other professionals – interface designers, software programmers, data analysts and business managers – who remain invisible behind the smooth surface of the screen. And where there is data, there are programs that feed on data, model it, react to it. A machinic world lurks behind the screen, and the machinic gaze is at the centre of any fragment one occupies on this screen-territory – every touch on the screen, every second one lingers on any part of the screen, is recorded. To the machinic eye, the selfie, or any photograph for that matter, is composed of a single substance – pixels, but no foreground, background or subject. It is from the level of the pixel that the face emerges once again, outlined and tagged by software programs. In other words, one’s face, when pictured in the field of the software programs, is an interface.

In so far as one’s face is an interface when it is caught in a network of interconnected cameras circulated on various everyday screens, the face can trigger, or be ‘recognized’, by surveillance software, a development which has caused much anxiety in technological policy circles. This is not down to any single diabolical corporation alone, as Clearview AI has been painted.¹⁹ It is right there on the surface of the smartphone, offering the very thing that such recognition systems threaten to breach – the security feature that allows phones to be unlocked by showing one’s face to the phone’s front-camera, the face as interface ‘secures’ the territorial integrity of one’s phone. Snapchat, a popular social media application, was one of the first to treat the face as an interface by introducing various playful features as filters that transform one’s face in a variety of ways, into a bunny rabbit, for instance. The beauty company L’Oréal recently bought out a start-up called Modiface, whose technological interface allows the user to apply make-up to the face on screen, without ever letting a speck of cosmetic powder touch the skin. These seemingly innocuous practices, part of a set of practices of territorialization at the interface that exemplify the face-as-interface, bear within them the conditions for the possibility to mark out a subject as a potential security risk, as a target for policing algorithms.

¹⁹ See, for instance, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/18/technology/clearview-privacy-facial-recognition.html>, accessed 21 May 2020.

The fact that the face is an interface interpellated in a political grid of machinic visibility does not imply the end of the territorial integrity of the subject mapped in a face-picture transacted on social screens. The artist Adam Harvey, drawing on cubism and a military-tactic from the First World War called Dazzle painting, developed a facial make-up technique called CV Dazzle. This make-up technique camouflages the face when seen by a camera, allowing the person to escape detection by automated face-recognition systems. Dazzle painting originated during the First World War, being developed for the British navy by the artist Norman Wilkinson. It involved painting ships in alternating stripes of contrasting colour tones that would camouflage the vessel against the sea and sky, making it a confusing target for enemy submarines tracking the ship's movement through their periscopes. In a paper presented to the Royal Society of Arts, Wilkinson says 'so-called invisibility against submarine attack is not only impossible, but dangerous, and consequently, if a vessel can be seen at all, it does not matter how visible she is, providing her course remains a matter of question to the attacker' (Wilkinson 1920: 264). Camouflage emerged around the time of the First World War as a mediation between the subject and its visual ground, not just as a military technique, but in a conjuncture with the plastic arts as well. Gertrude Stein recounts an episode with Picasso, one of the central figures in cubism who was also responsible for shattering the integrity of the face in portraiture. 'I very well remember at the beginning of the war being with Picasso on the boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed... Picasso, amazed, looked at it and then cried out, yes, it is we who made it, that is cubism'.²⁰

Adam Harvey situates his project within this tradition of cubism and camouflage: 'CV Dazzle uses avant-garde hairstyling and make-up designs to break apart the continuity of a face',²¹ thus presenting to face-detection systems an 'anti-face' which is camouflaged into a background of pixels, destabilizing the coordinates that govern the software process of tracing the face. Lacan, in his discussion of the stain and the picture, draws on this notion of camouflage, following the work of Roger Callois on mimicry in animals and suggesting

²⁰ Gertrude Stein, quoted in Gallois 2019: 154.

²¹ Quoted from the artist's description in the project website <https://cvdazzle.com/> Accessed on 21st May, 2020. See the webpage for images of people wearing CV Dazzle camouflage make-up.

Prince, A stain in the picture

that in camouflage the subject as a stain maps itself completely into the picture, becoming mottled against a motley background.

Forcing the stain off the picture

In late 2019, Sri Lanka's Department of Immigration and Emigration made an announcement banning excessive make-up on passport photos.²² The point of controversy concerned the status of the *pottu*, a *bindi*, or a small, usually round spot or mark worn on the forehead mostly by Tamil women in Sri Lanka,²³ which, as a form of make-up, fell under the ban's umbrella. This move was announced as being in keeping with the regulations for passport photos issued back in 2015 by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). A backlash followed, particularly from women in the Tamil community who contended that the ICAO regulations were drawn up so as to retain a liberal attitude of respect for religious practices such as the covering of hair. They alleged that every government formulates its laws to target first women and their bodies, whether that is through the hijab or the *pottu*. Gayan Milinda, the department's spokesperson, clarified that the move was not targeted at Tamil women, that it was simply being done in order to comply with the ICAO regulation stipulating that the forehead must be clearly visible on the photo, and that other 'alterations' to the face through excessive make-up, such as 'a particularly large *pottu* which makes one's face unrecognizable', would be in violation of ICAO regulations. This was because it would affect the machine-readability of the face-image in passports.²⁴ Machines that transact the face as an interface require a naturalized, de-cultivated face, and the State Department, seemingly in accordance with the requirements of the machinic algorithm, demanded compliance by the subjects.

Invoking such machinic criteria for reasons of national security or citing the 'community guidelines' of a social network platform, statements such as 'not too large a *bindi*', 'you know the arsonists from the clothes they wear', or gestures like the removal of

²² See http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=215109, accessed 21 May 2020.

²³ Wearing a *pottu* or a *bindi* is a common practice in India among Hindu women, particularly married women, but in the southern states unmarried girls also wear a *bindi*, usually in black rather than the red that married women wear. It is usually the last article to be applied to the face in front of the mirror in the everyday practice of 'making-up' one's face.

²⁴ See <https://www.bbc.com/tamil/sri-lanka-50725416>, accessed 21st May 2020. I have translated the phrase from Tamil.

the blood-stained picture, and even the forceful smashing of video-game consoles by irritated parents, all represent attempts to compose a field of permissible and impermissible visibilities and territorializations. They thus seek the elimination of the subjective attachment to the circulating screen and interrupt the territorialization of the subject at the interface. Benedict Anderson suggests that the nation is an imagined community, a notion that Appadurai (1997) extends, asking us to consider imagination as a ‘social practice’. Faced with a gaze that threatens the forceful detachment of the subject from the picture, the work of a community of imagination is underway, sustaining itself in its complex heterogeneity through processes of attachment. This happens as subjects populate the circulating images, mapping themselves on to a dynamic social picture, co-habiting a territory in a motley composition of collective desire, blending, staining the picture with a *bindi*, a headscarf, a blood spot, a *chappal* – singularities without identity, where the subject dissolves as a stain among others.

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'TO ANTHROPOLOGY, FROM MEAT PRISON'¹

BENEDICT TAYLOR-GREEN²

Abstract

The present essay, begun just before and written during the 2020 UK lockdown owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, draws first on the philosophical anthropology of Plessner (1970, 2019) and Wentzer (2017), finding ground in the notion of responsiveness. Then, working in a broadly auto-phenomenological manner inspired by a mundane encounter with television news, the force of a televisual scream is used to explore anthropology of and as responsiveness, culminating in a critique of the anthropological theory of moralities put forward by Jarrett Zigon (2007). What results is an intentionally 'simplistic representation(s) of social reality' (Stoczkowski 2008: 351), certainly anthropology, but I argue that, at least minimally, a moralizing anthropology is required as a possibility within any anthropological theory of moralities.

Introduction

In a spirited article in this journal entitled 'The anthropological horizon: Max Scheler, Arnold Gehlen and the idea of a philosophical anthropology' (1985), David J. Levy attempted to introduce a British social anthropological readership to a potted history and to the potential pitfalls and merits of attending to the Germanophone tradition of philosophical anthropology. This was surfacing at the time Levy wrote in the form of an interest in Heideggerian thought, which has not diminished to this day. Although I do not deal with the content of Levy's essay directly here, I make an attempt to carry on the conversation further, in the spirit rather than the letter, regarding this lineage of philosophical anthropology, until recently largely neglected by British social anthropologists. The present essay, begun just before and written during the 2020 UK lockdown owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, draws first on the philosophical anthropologies of Helmuth Plessner (1970, 2019) and Thomas Schwarz Wentzer (2017), finding ground in the notion of responsiveness. Then, inspired by a mundane encounter with television news, the force of a televisual scream is used to explore anthropology of and as responsiveness, resulting in the critique of the anthropological theory of moralities put forward by Zigon (2007). What results is an intentionally 'simplistic representation(s) of social reality' (Stoczkowski 2008: 351), but I contend that 'it corresponds to the nature of the case, makes us see other men in a true light and reminds us of what are

¹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44657/to-althea-from-prison>

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the most necessary of all things: tolerance, patience, forbearance and charity, which each of us needs and which each of us therefore owes' (Schopenhauer 1970: 50).

Responsiveness

According to Plessner's philosophical anthropology, unlike inanimate beings, the living body is distinguished by the border between inner and outer. Plants have this border and are open to the world, but they do not have a relationship with the inner and outer aspects of their borders. Animals, however, have a closed but 'centric' positionality in a physical sense as an organism with a nervous system, with a psychic component that facilitates its awareness of its environment. Border crossings are mediated by this centre, and hence the animal not only has a body but inhabits its body. But 'the here/now does not become objective for the animal; it does not set itself apart from it' (Plessner 2019: 221); 'from its own perspective, it is pure me, not I' (ibid.: 251). As animals, humans have this centre, but unlike them, we take a position regarding it. We simultaneously experience ourselves as having a body, as in a body, one with access to our inner and outer worlds, and yet we are decentred from that position by being aware of it as though looking in from the outside. By being aware of our own centre and being able to reflect upon it as though from the outside in, we adopt an 'excentric positionality' (ibid.: 296). In this way, excentric positionality is virtual – not quite in a body or place, but 'a reflexive relationship the living body has to itself' (de Mul 2014: 464). Our excentric positionality leads to a deep sense of imbalance in human beings for Plessner, linking material culture to our 'homelessness' (2019: 297) in that, through artificial means, we must remedy being set adrift from ourselves and the world, anchoring ourselves in space to make our eccentricity bearable. Material culture, rather than being something alien imbricated in our projects, is considered an 'ontic necessity' (de Mul 2014: 28): we are 'by nature *artificial*' (Plessner 2019: 288, emphasis in the original).

In *Laughing and crying: a study of the limits of human behaviour* (1970), Plessner comes to see laughing and crying as universal involuntary responses to 'boundary situation(s)' (1970: 144), which reveal the limits of our capacity to respond appropriately, although he is careful to note that our motives for laughing and crying are likely to be historically determined by the boundaries set for us as social beings at some level (ibid.: 18). Consonant with the broader Germanophone tradition of philosophical anthropology, the primary interest in laughing and crying is rooted in their ostensibly being exclusively human behaviours. Plessner takes the position that crying is a type of expressive utterance without symbolic form, whether or not it is laden with meaning within the boundaries of human sociality

experienced from inside or outside the person. We cannot compare crying to a linguistic utterance, for that would presuppose control. Proper crying is a loss of self-control with the retention of acute self-awareness. Meeting with a boundary situation, in which his capacity to respond fails him, the excentricity of man's relation to himself and to the world is disorganized. Overcome by feeling in the loss of reference, confronted by impossibility and faced with the usually concealed 'clarity of Being' (ibid.: 144), man succumbs to centricity, animal positionality, 'to [letting] his body answer in his place' (ibid.).

Metaphorically extending Plessner's thoughts on crying and boundary situations to the nature of the anthropological paradox that runs from Socrates to the present (cf. Schües 2014) concerning the impossibility of definitive self-knowledge – which, for philosophical anthropology, is the boundary situation par excellence, and in fact, we may argue, the real problem that keeps any anthropology turning – 'crying' then becomes a placeholder signifying the universality of the encounter with the unknowable in the search for definitive self-understanding as human beings. Wedded to the unspeakable – speaking. Fused with the unthinkable – thinking. How do we salvage something from this boundary situation that appears to suggest a redundancy? According to Thomas Schwarz Wentzer (2017: 27), philosophical anthropology:

would then mean to reflect the indeterminacy of any discourse that tries to deal with the human, being aware of the ontological peculiarity of its subject. 'Philosophical anthropology' then would function as a formal indication of a certain way of questioning, not as a label referring to a well-established discipline or tradition.

In this 'non-existing discipline' (ibid.: 26), taking as our starting point the universally shared existential predicament in which 'every individual human being as well as every group, society or culture – has to explore its meaning anew' (ibid.: 3), it all hinges in the end on how we *respond* in action, or indeed reflection, to the irresistible challenge of the burden and interpret this paradox for ourselves. Either way: 'It would be absurd to wait until we know who we are, before we start living' (ibid.: 35). Human life barrels on regardless and in defiance of the circularity that is found at the core of anthropological self-interpretation. Moreover, we continually respond to the interminable otherness of the world itself: we have relations to the alien on both sides of our boundary. In this respect, Wentzer opines that philosophical anthropology thus described responds to the post-humanist challenge that would disallow recourse to any essentialist view of human nature. Instead our focus is aligned with attention to the ways in which humans 'perform their existence' (ibid.: 34).

Proposing a hermeneutics of existential responsiveness that locates the universal experience of the paradox of human self-understanding in the particular experience of the individual's life, Wentzer draws upon Bernard Waldenfels' four topoi of the logic of responsiveness in a phenomenology of otherness.³ Moving away from both the traditional vision of intentionality as the cardinal concept in phenomenology and intentionalist theories drawing from the speech acts of questioning and answering that presuppose normative commitments in terms of rules structuring a dialectic – wherein the question asked posits a missing piece of information in its content and the answer provides it – we take our point of departure as the existential space of the demand that 'remains alien or remote to the propositional act or dialogical content that it facilitates' (Wentzer 2017: 37) and the existential event of 'being asked' (ibid.) that is usually bracketed in a description of responsiveness that takes the speech acts of question and answer as its model. We are reoriented, now in the 'pre-normative obligation that opens the space of normative behaviour in the first place. It demonstrates an existential commitment that precedes intentionality and its accounts of intentional subjects' (ibid.: 38). On this account, every demand is experienced as a singular event to which we inevitably respond. There is a delay between demand and response otherwise called the 'responsive difference' (ibid.: 39). Finally there is an 'asymmetry' (ibid.) between demand from the world and our capacity for response because the world is infinitely larger in its capacity to demand a response from finite human respondents than the capacity those respondents have to match it. Thus our lives entail endless dynamics of demand and response in all aspects of our existence which we can never exhaust. Taking responsiveness as its basis, through its questioning, philosophical anthropology attends to the situation that we find ourselves in as already ongoing, and thus pays credence to the ways in which we respond to it while acknowledging 'its internal remoteness and intrinsic alterity' (ibid.: 39). By moving away from speech acts and linguistic communication, we are rested deeper in the corporeality of human being. And although the emphasis is placed on the individual's existential predicament, the dynamic of demand and response ensures that we remain tethered to our 'primordial intersubjective and social existence' (ibid. :42).

It is our responsibility, thrust upon us in the world we emerge from and into, to find responsive solutions to, and develop partial understandings of, the demands of life. The philosophical anthropology Wentzer proposes is a reflective inquiry into responses to these

³ Other scholars translate this latter term as 'alien' (see Friesen 2014).

demands, paying special attention to those that reveal the paradox(es) of self-understanding and our existential burden to make of it what we can, thus satisfying his own condition that it should be a formal manner of questioning, rather than a rigidly defined discipline.

Most of the time we do find a way to keep going. But inevitably, and at various junctures, in the asymmetry between demand from the world and our capacity to respond, we meet with our finitude: insufficiently equipped, overwhelmed. Our bodies answer for us (Plessner 1970).

Bad News (21/02/2020)

About half an hour to midnight, I sat down to watch some trashy 'news' with my tea. Seeing as I'd recently given in (or rather, been cajoled) to signing up for a 'free' ITV hub online account, just to watch a leader's debate during the filthy 2019 general election – and due to the fact that my generation are not the TV licence fee-paying type – what better source?⁴ Alas, it was not trash. Today was a bad news day on several fronts.

The first piece was a spotlight on Laos. Today, as a result of the actions of the United States military, who dropped two hundred and seventy million bombs on the country in a failed attempt to cut off supply routes used by the Vietcong, 45 years after the Vietnam war's official end, the humans of Laos are haunted in their every step by unexploded ordnance. Eighty million bombs remain unexploded. Life in Laos is pocked with the worst, most indiscriminate kinds of surprises. An old lady pokes her face out of the window of a house clad with waste metal from exploded ordnance and bits of jettisoned aircraft, both bearing the name of *Northrop Grumman*, a still extant US arms manufacturer.⁵

An unexploded bomb has been found on the edges of a school playground by the metal detectors. The children are waiting for it to be detonated by the disposal team. A little girl in a red shirt is surrounded by her friends in a continuous shot, hands over her ears, aware she is being watched by the cameraman. Just after the bomb is exploded, she lets slip across her face a glimmer of absolute helplessness that was hidden in the suspense, right before she finds her appropriate response, mimicking the sounds of the explosion while looking round to her friends, and trying desperately to laugh it off with them. In that moment, one now being smoothed over with laughter and mutually experienced with the others, she inhabits Earth

⁴ We pay in cookies etc.

⁵ '...we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, our agency.' (Gell 1998:103)

fearfully. The reporter finishes his segment by saying: 'I'm afraid it'll be hundreds of years before Laos is rid of this widespread menace.'

The second piece informs us that a racist, right-wing terrorist in Germany has shot and killed eight immigrants, including a pregnant mother of two, and wounded a number of others before killing his own mother and then himself. Merkel blames racism for the attacks. Following the previous report from Laos, my attention was drawn to the gun, without which this heinous massacre by one human being could not have occurred in the specific manner it did: 'violent extremists are at their most dangerous when they are able to accumulate weapons and get organised', says the commentator in the studio.⁶

The piece on Laos in particular was a distinct instance of television as a moral(izing) technology. We see living, wounded bodies, children afflicted by the spectral wounds of always potential horror, maiming and death lurking in every inch of their world, the present absence of the bomb part of their chthonic reality (cf. Dawney 2019). Television here functions as a device to remind us of, to update us on, our own cruelty, in doing so instilling within us at some level the notion that harming is morally wrong: in this case, specifically that weapon design, manufacture and use are morally wrong because they contribute to the construction of an unliveable public space. Designs, and as in Laos artefacts, outlive the conflicts that justified their coming into being (Forge 2019: 78). And so, here the televisual also reminds us that we must take our responsibility to living and future humans not yet born seriously (cf. Adam and Groves 2007). Given this directive, unquestionably worthy of airtime, it is surely not too much to ask to tug on our heart strings out of raw human (albeit non-humanly mediated) and largely autonomic mimesis in the mind's eyes and ears (Keyzers and Gazzola 2009: 10) in virtue of this magical machine (Taussig 1993). Although, regardless of moralizing optics, watching anybody on screen we experience contortions of the virtual body in the sympathetic violence of spectatorship, in and for ourselves, indexically we are related to the bodies we perceive (cf. MacDougall 2006).⁷

'(A) loud, unending scream piercing nature' and culture

In these scenes from Laos and Germany, inhumanity reigned supreme, if not because of, then intrinsically involving bombs and guns. However, the last few bad news items involved natural happenings: floods in northern England and the potentially uncontrollable outbreak of

⁶ As we saw above, this applies just as much to recognized states.

⁷ What these images carrying the 'charge' of human spirits want above all is 'acknowledgement' (Taussig 2009: 274).

COVID-19 in China, then teetering on pandemic status. Immersed momentarily in this iota of televisual media, these 'natural'⁸ happenings only served to demonstrate how, in the grand scheme of things, there is enough suffering in the world without weapons (and the necessary means of delivery, of course.).

The screams of a doctor in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China (ostensibly the initial epicentre of the COVID-19 epidemic) chasing after the vehicle carrying her husband's corpse, now contaminated with the disease, away from the hospital building, tore through my midriff, roaring into an all-enveloping shudder, an immediate sympathy. Anyone who has known the immediacy of unexpected death – a loved one suddenly, irretrievably gone – will know something of the shock she was in. But this, in the midst of a disease outbreak, that she and her husband had been trying so hard to help contain and treat victims of.... Her body responds for her. Surrounded by her colleagues, all in masks, no facial expressions, inhumanity permeates the scene. Yet, one colleague responded in kind to her screams by doing what he or she could to address her suffering – small though it was – hugging her from behind (presumably to avoid droplet transmission) and attempting to comfort her while restraining her from following the car further.

How, as finite human beings, do we respond to the infinite demands of being alive? We are infinitely outnumbered (Wentzer 2017). Most of the time we find our appropriate response, but sometimes we simply cannot. Overcome by feeling, we let our bodies answer for us (Plessner 1970) – screams, sobs, little flashes of helplessness across the face, eruptions of visceral knowledge, involuntary expressions of the voluntarily inexpressible and overwhelming. These gratuitous (re-)acts of the body (cf. Rapport 2008) reach into the depths of everyone, in each case expressing something at once particular and universal, pertaining to human existence. Through the televisual, we meet each other's corporeal images in active spectation (Taussig 1993, MacDougall 2006). Here, there is a searing reality to the signals. No translation, or interpretation, no critique or contemplation is required. There are non-arbitrary signficatory links between the event and its image/sound (cf. Taussig 2009: 264), captured in the televisual fragment indexing it, transported, encountered and felt by this spectator, evoked here in writing, finally translated as – just maybe – mental imagery with affective resonances: in and for you, dear reader.

⁸ Here, although COVID-19 is in an important respect a natural happening (although in another respect it is only significant to us in its nature-cultural emergence, and the human-virus hybridity that becomes, I use the word 'natural' with some reservations in light of another word: 'preventable'. This tiny replicator has highlighted sinews and fractures in the socio-political, moral entanglement of the entire planet.

Screams

The facial expression of the little girl in Laos and the scream of the doctor in Wuhan rest us bodily in the space of pre-normative obligation Wentzer speaks of, not simply to existence itself but, if we are reasonable, by extrapolation, to the other. It is the scream, now, that I want to focus on, contained within reportage that is less explicitly moralizing than in the piece on Laos but, as we will shortly discuss, the scream as a response itself, which, while demanding an ethical response from whoever hears it, is non-moral. Might the scream here figure as a 'distress signal' (Taussig 2009: 273) with import for a moral anthropology?

In the images from Wuhan, with everyone in full body containment suits and face masks, which obscures much of the detail one would usually rely upon visually, it is particularly due to the sonic dimension of the filmic that meaning⁹ stays with them in this realist transmission. Although they are non-communicational, screams mean. We know what they mean (screams are strange like this), even without the image, and without deixis. Quite simply, 'the "what" that is going on' (Massumi 2014: 77) is suffering. You don't think through these screams, as I have done here, you feel them in the act of hearing them: 'Corporeal understanding: you don't so much see as be hit' (Taussig 1993: 23).

In his article 'Phenomenology of the Scream' (2014), Peter Schwenger, drawing sustenance from Emmanuel Levinas's earliest published work, *Existence and existents* (2014 [1978]), also understands screams – real screams, that is – as non-communicational, involuntary responses; but here, expressing the desire for non-existence in this moment, exposed to the ferocious inhumanity that perturbs and inhabits each of us and in which we only 'participate' (Schwenger 2014: 389) as existents. Notably, Levinas, who conceived of *Existence and existents* while in a prisoner-of-war camp, reveals in this work an intimacy with a truly universal predicament that could only have been gotten from the inside, specifically in continued exposure to brutalized conditions perpetrated by other humans, which in turn accentuated his awareness of the corporeal punishment of raw existence. What Levinas calls the '*there is*' (2014: 52) describes an unrelenting horror found in existence itself, which Schwenger finds peculiar to the real scream. What we will struggle to talk about is an unspeakable primitivism found in the subject's encounter with brutal materiality and their being a body-part of 'it', an imprisonment that pervades our very being, the rendering impersonal of consciousness as possessed by an individuated human life, 'condensed to the

⁹ Perhaps also spirit or charge (cf. Taussig 2009).

point of suffocation' (Levinas 2014: 56).¹⁰ Here 'horror is somehow a movement' (ibid.: 55) in which the subject is dissolved before its own eyes, plunged into and submerged by the impersonality it rides with, ever lurking, but following Schwenger, acutely catalysed by suffering and the appearance of death.¹¹ The scream is a 'force' expressing a horrific sense of spatiotemporal 'situatedness' (Schwenger 2014: 393) specific to the body, both the bitter affirmation of, and the doomed flight from, 'that meat insisting that we inhabit a certain position in space' (ibid.: 389).¹² Schwenger finds in screams a piercing clarity that does not simply reveal inhumanity at work (whether humanly or non-humanly perpetrated, so to speak) and is not simply a response to it, but is the inhuman in us:

There is then a final irony in the scream: if it is forced from us as a response to the horror of pure existence, to being trapped by existence, it belongs itself to the order of things that are wiped clean of personal being. Essentially, every scream is like every other; and no scream can reconstitute the I that emits it. And so the redoubling of the scream is not an acoustic cloning of our personal selves; what it redoubles is the horror of existence at degree zero. (ibid.: 395)

How do we usually respond when we hear screams, not through television but in close proximity to ourselves? In folk terms, the only appropriate response I can think of, one that nearly anyone would feel demanded of them by the scream, without having to stretch our imaginations too far, is: *if we can, to do what we can, to address their suffering*,¹³ however small.

All this may seem strange. The answer to the previous question may (or, indeed, may not) seem obvious. Yet there is, I believe, something to be learned in theoretical, methodological and subsequently 'ethnographic' terms for contemporary anthropology from the scream as response, and this idealistic speculation regarding a generic folk response to it. In order to elucidate a proto-argument in this respect, I now turn to an anthropological theory of moralities, put forward by the philosophical anthropologist Jarret Zigon, that is centred on

¹⁰ '11.2. Got up with a bad headache. Lay in euthanasian concentration on the ship. Loss of subjectivism and deprivation of the will (blood flowing away from the brain?), living only by the five senses and the body (through impressions) causes direct merging with surroundings. Had the feeling that the rattling of the ship's engine was myself; felt the motions of the ship as my own – it was *I* who was bumping against the waves and cutting through them' (Malinowski 1989: 33-4). 'Tuesday, 4.17 [*sic*] ... feeling of permanently being exposed in an uncomf. position to the eyes of a crowded thoroughfare: an incapacity to achieve inner privacy' (ibid.: 253).

¹¹ There are, then, interesting contrasts with Levinas's account, which cannot be followed up here, in his insistence contra Heidegger on 'the fear of being not fear for being' (Levinas 2014: 58) as revealed in the encounter with the *there is*.

¹² I do not mean to exclude many other reactions from the figural category of the scream, as long as they are autonomic expressions of suffering, and/or in the face of death. The flash of helplessness across the little girl's face in Laos was a scream by other means.

¹³ A moralizing claim that underpins what I go on to write (see note 30).

a dynamic of demand and response and which I address critically both on its own terms and through the scream.

An Anthropological Theory of Moralities¹⁴

Jarrett Zigon proposes a phenomenologically influenced 'anthropological theory of moralities' (2007: 148) for an 'anthropology of moralities' (ibid.: 132) that would delineate a subdiscipline, just as there is an anthropology of art, of religion etc.¹⁵ He is keen to overcome the Durkheimian subsumption of Kantian moral philosophy – the latter being deontological and concerned with moral norms (rules), and relying upon a conception of an autonomous, rational individual to make choices according to their knowledge of what is considered good and bad – with the concept of society or culture. This then becomes for Durkheim the relative arbiter of an individual's understanding of morality, as well as the principal determining factor of choices regarding moral action. With this Durkheimian inheritance pervading the works of contemporary anthropologists, as is evident in their belief that they have always been studying morals and moralities (Zigon 2007: 132; cf. Parkin 1985), Zigon thinks it is difficult to demarcate a proper anthropology of moralities.

More importantly, Zigon presents his theory in reference to the vexing problem of moralism in anthropology (2007: 231), namely that of the anthropologist's own morality becoming the centrepiece of the study, rather than the local moralities he or she is supposed to be documenting, instead moralizing about situations and actions they may find irksome, even abhorrent, during the course of fieldwork or otherwise.¹⁶ To combat this, Zigon proposes an entirely descriptive approach (cf. Stade 2018: 120).¹⁷

Behind Zigon's rejection of a moral(izing) anthropology is the belief that social-science knowledge is not attained through the passions of the anthropologist. As is traditional, anthropologists must do their best not to be ethnocentric in their presuppositions and analyses – or worse, given these risks, intervene 'morally' in the field. Here, aside from a glib mention

¹⁴ Zigon expands upon and tries out variations of this foundational theory of moral breakdown and ethical response at several junctures (2009, 2009, 2010, 2014a, 2014b, 2018). However, the kernel developed in 2007 remains in these later works, so while not entirely ignoring the latter, and also due to spatial constraints, I focus on his original articulation.

¹⁵ Zigon mistakenly believes that anthropologists have not been studying morality 'all along' (2007: 132), but this is not of great importance here.

¹⁶ More broadly, this is not a new 'problem', and as Stoczkowski (2008) notes, various key figures, such as Tylor, Delafosse and Levi-Strauss, considered moral(izing) elements to be essential parts of their own projects, in their own ways. Even Durkheim considered the final step in the study of primitives to involve utilizing insights gained to improve western society, not least morally.

¹⁷ This is itself something inherited from the origins of sociology in Durkheim, or perhaps rather, and in light of the previous note, Max Weber (cf. Fassin 2012: 2).

in the abstract to the problem of moralism in anthropology generally, which nevertheless demonstrates the foundational premise of the work, Zigon makes reference to James Laidlaw and Joel Robbins, among others, paying attention to the different philosophically influenced approaches to local moralities they employ in their ethnographies. In the present essay, however, taking the broader implications at work in the avoidance of moralism in anthropology that is at the root of Zigon's work, and following D'Andrade (1995) and Fassin (2008), we may imagine Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995) and other concerned thinkers (cf. MacClancy ed. 2002) who argue for compassionate, even radical activist engagement in the situations they may witness – for instance, unnecessary human suffering perpetuated via abuses of power or neglect, considering this a meaningful part, verging on the obligatory, of the human science they practice – as the straw figure(s) of the moral(izing) anthropologist.¹⁸ Notably, Stoczkowski launches a scathing critique of uncritically lavished compassion's threat to the epistemological integrity of anthropology, denouncing moral(izing) anthropology as superficial 'Pietist ethics' (2008: 349). The 'fourth aim of anthropology', to engage in social transformation beyond just 'describe – understand – explain' (2008: 351), is but another social-science soteriology doomed to failure (ibid.). Instead, Stoczkowski, following Fassin (2008; see also Fassin 2012), extols a descriptive and self-reflexive/critical (cf. Caduff 2011) approach to the anthropological study of morals. Subsequently, Zigon joins the 'potlach among the chiefs' (Kalb 2018: 67), firmly aligning himself with Fassin's and Stoczkowski's displacement of moralism (Zigon 2010: 4).

According to Holbraad, the strategy that Zigon uses to begin his anthropological theory of moralities¹⁹ is that of downward analytical displacement of the problem of moralism in anthropology, 'in as much as the idea is to go underneath moral and ethical concerns to find a deeper level of inquiry at which such phenomena can be framed in terms that are themselves not moral or ethical' (2018: 38). This strategy fails, presupposing what Holbraad takes to be a moral position – that as an anthropologist of moralities, one's theoretical understanding of morality and/or ethics must be worked out programmatically 'before' (ibid.: 43) setting out on one's exploration. Although this strategy risks muddying perceptions of 'the field', the notion is not without merit. I run with it in my critical analysis.

Zigon takes Martin Heidegger's *Being and time* (1967) as the keystone of his own framework, which was not an 'ethical' work per se, but apparently holds out promise for

¹⁸ '...moral advocacy (I know what is right and the world should change to conform to my vision of what is right)' (D'Andrade 2000: 226).

¹⁹ And thus, in his own 'ethics', so to speak. I return to this later.

being such. Three Heideggerian concepts, 'being-in-the-world, being-with, and breakdown' (Zigon 2007: 134), become foundational to an anthropological theory of moralities. 'Being-in-the-world', as Zigon presents it, refers to the familiar, largely unreflective state we find ourselves in most of the time – dwelling in the world through our involvement with it, an existence that is both 'openly shared and deeply personal' (ibid.: 135). 'Being-with', by which Zigon means with 'persons' (ibid.), is implied by 'being-in-the-world', becoming the guarantor of a non-solipsistic existence, meaning we are always with others, 'even in their absence' (ibid.: 136). In introducing the concepts of 'being-in-the-world' and 'being with', Zigon is providing ontological support for a model that challenges the entire determination of an individual's morality by the prescriptions of their familiar culture (cf. Rapport 1997) while simultaneously ensuring a conception of relationality between individuals. We shall return to the third Heideggerian concept of 'breakdown' shortly.

After situating the anthropology of moralities in the ontology of Heidegger, Zigon brings a moral/ethical twist to the philosophical anthropology of responsiveness we first met in Wentzer (2017), resting his theory in part, and at an essential juncture, on an existential dynamic of demand and response drawn from the Scandinavian philosopher Logstrup, whose work, as Zigon notes, is '(v)ery similar to the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas' (Zigon 2007: 138), in that responsibility for the other is taken to be the foundational notion of ethics. From Logstrup, and building on Heidegger's 'being-with', Zigon takes for his own theory (only) the idea that 'ethics is a socially constituted ethics' (ibid.). He concludes that 'the ethical demand (of the moral breakdown) ... is a product of the particular situation and the individuals involved' (ibid.). Yet, unsurprisingly,²⁰ while each is capable of acting freely to some degree in each unique situation, even if this means simply choosing from 'a range of possibilities' (cf. Zigon 2009), one of which includes walking away from the demand of the other (2007: 138), these individuals, it seems, are still in large part constrained by the contingencies of society/culture, and thus history, in their responses. Finally, Zigon draws on Badiou (Badiou and Hallward 2001; Zigon 2007: 139), from whom he takes the notion that ethics is about keeping going.²¹

The kernel of Zigon's anthropological theory of moralities, then, is to be found in his distinction between 'morality' and 'ethics'. Humans usually exist unreflectively in the 'moral dispositions of everyday life' (2007: 135) – until, that is, a problematic situation or event

²⁰ This has implications for our conception of the individual in a Durkheimian vein, which can result in an 'impersonalization' (Rapport 1997: 7; Durkheim 2008: 571- 4).

²¹ Rather than responsibility.

causes a 'moral breakdown' (ibid.: 137), when these usually unconsidered moralities suddenly move into the focal point of experience. An ethical demand is thus placed upon the individual 'to return to the unreflective moral dispositions of everydayness' (ibid.: 139). In order to complete this return to the familiar – which has a paradoxical element, thinks Zigon, in that one might never be quite the same as one was before the breakdown – 'one must perform ethics' (ibid.: 137), doing what it takes to get back to normal and keep going. '(E)thics are a tactic' (ibid.) developed reflectively as a response to the ethical demand of the moral breakdown in being made to 'step-away and figure out' (ibid.). These tactics are subsequently acted out in the interests of achieving the return to unreflective everyday morality. A distinct temporality, then, is established by the model, a process beginning from unreflective, moral being-in-the-world, interrupted by the event of moral breakdown which forces reflection upon morality, precipitating the return to unreflective being-in-the-world via the performance of ethics. There is a sort of cyclicity at work, but as noted, neither the individual nor the world is ever quite the same afterwards. And so (recalling Wentzer, and our televisual foray), Zigon argues that it is here, in this dynamic of moral breakdown and ethical response, that anthropologists of moralities should dwell to gain insights into the ways in which morality and ethics are unreflectively held and consciously made manifest.²²

However, and I take this to be crucial, according to Zigon, 'being in the world should not be thought of as bodily' (2007: 135). He thus distinguishes unreflective moral being-in-the-world from *habitus*,²³ with which it might sound as though the unreflective moral dispositions to which Zigon alludes are akin (ibid.). Instead, it is this both 'deeply personal' and relationally constituted familiarity in an ontological sense, rather than a corporeal one – the latter being an epiphenomenal, largely unconscious manifestation of the former – that underpins the scene:

²² I address Zigon in somewhat of a vacuum here in relation to broader debates in the anthropology of morality. Beldo (2014) offers an insightful critique for interested readers. In his focus on problematization in the moral breakdown, and later on self-improvement, Zigon reifies a Foucauldian notion of ethics and applies it across the board. The theory of moral breakdown is indeed one manner in which morality and ethics is made manifest for humans and thus for the anthropology of moralities, but it is not an 'exhaustive description' (Beldo 2014: 270). Indeed, 'anyone living a self-examined life' (ibid.: 271) may desire to be constantly reflective about their moral being-in-the-world rather than always seeking a return to the unreflective. Likewise, it is not necessarily the case that all people of all cultures reflect solipsistically in the breakdown, nor, even if they do consciously reflect upon moralities, seek a return to existential comfort simply for themselves: rather, they look to the social chains of obligation they are enmeshed in and that inform their being-in-the-world.

²³ Zigon (2010: 8) prefers Mauss's version of *habitus* to Bourdieu's because it 'emphasises the conscious and intentional work necessary to acquire a particular kind of habitus' (cf. 2009: 260), thus equating habitus with 'ethics'. As already noted, he leaves the unreflective moral dispositions with Heideggerian 'being-in-the-world'.

Because being in the world, then, is a relationship of being-with and not embodied – although it is made manifest in bodily dispositions or comportments – it is a mode of being that is always open to the world and never statically and permanently encapsulated, as one reading of Bourdieu's habitus suggests. (Zigon 2007: 136)

Meat and Time

First, I want to insert the scream as a response to a moral breakdown, which is constitutive of a duration in lived time, into the temporality of Zigon's theoretical framework. As a catalyst, we may then find this insightful in terms of the understanding the appropriate response *to* the scream, while at the same time turning the framework back on itself.

Zigon claims that '(t)he (ethical) demand, because of the very fact that it occurs within the moment of moral breakdown, is unconventional' (2007: 139), precisely because it is a forced problematization of unreflective moral everydayness. However, at the same time, people may conceive of the moral breakdown as 'immoral' (ibid.). Thus, contra Zigon's rally against Durkheim, in the moral breakdown the influence of culture/society as social convention is found no less in the negative: every system of morality needs structural opposites of good and bad (Olsen and Csordas 2019 :9). But we cannot say the same for the scream as response. In its pure form it is both a-social and pan-cultural: '...the scream is not a conscious call for help to another but an unconscious reflex, one that would have taken place whether or not there was anybody there to hear it' (Schwenger 2014: 383). The scream is unconventional: it is non-moral and pre-ethical, not least in terms of the temporality of Zigon's theory. With the scream we approach a moment in which culture (embodied or otherwise) dissolves, and society momentarily becomes a whisper in the distance: structures of ordinary consciousness and actual bodily comportment are disrupted. Zigon considers only that the performer of ethics reflects upon the breakdown: he does not contend with the fact that sometimes it is our body that answers for us first. The scream as a device here enacts a downward displacement that, following Holbraad's (2018) analysis of Zigon's strategy, properly meets the criteria of going beneath (or rather between) morality and ethics, and in fact, culture – if only for a moment, cutting through the 'desert of relativism' (Stade 2018: 129) and the proposal of a purely descriptive model. Following Levinas and Schwenger, we cannot understand the scream as a response occupying a duration of lived time without (being) the meat that insists we exist. We scream between the onset of moral breakdown and the beginning of an ethical process which hopes to return us to normal, unreflective moralities of the everyday. Contra Zigon, in this moment between morality and ethics now occupied by the scream, we do not step away – in fact, we are rooted to the spot. We do not reflect but are

revealed to ourselves as prisoners of our bodies and the suffering we undergo as patients of Existence, as well as at the hands of each other.²⁴ Our being-in-the-world is resolutely located in the body. In extreme cases, to 'keep going' comes after the fact of having lived in horror, which demands of, provokes from, a body a thoughtless, autonomic, non-moral, temporally pre-ethical response to the impossibility of any other 'appropriate' response – following Plessner, in the breakdown of ordinary existential relations, overwhelmed in the act of 'being asked' (Wentzer 2017: 37). Omitting this eventuality, Zigon (2007) fails to consider the meaty time between the moral breakdown and beginning the ethical process, which occurs in the pre-normative space of obligation to existence itself. This, as I will now discuss, problematizes the ethics that his theory performs as a response to a/the moral breakdown in anthropology, and in turn, the way the model *prescribes* the relevant response of future anthropologists to the ethical demand of the other. 'There is always a risk in performing ethics. But one must act' (Zigon 2007: 139).

'Defective Presentness'

...(S)ilence can't exist in a literal sense as the experience of an audience. It would mean that the spectator was aware of no stimulus or that he was unable to make a response. But this can't happen or be induced programmatically. The non-awareness of any stimulus, the inability to make a response, can result only from a defective presentness on the part of the spectator, or a misunderstanding of his own reactions (misled by restrictive ideas about what would be a 'relevant' response). But so far as any audience consists of sentient beings in a situation, there can be no such thing as having no response at all. (Sontag 1967)

When Zigon's theory is turned back upon itself, it seems there is little (meta)recognition that the attempted displacement of moralism underpinning his descriptive programme is itself an ethical response to a perceived moral breakdown in anthropology, represented by the 'blended model(s)' (D'Andrade 1995: 405) where the objective and the subjective collide, and the (im)possibility of (self-) critical, anthropologically informed activism looms on the horizon of human science.

As already noted, the last philosopher Zigon draws upon is Alan Badiou (Badiou and Hallward 2001), who finds the maxim 'keep going', which we also find a version of in Wentzer (2017), at the root of several philosophical ethical traditions, and whose involvement

²⁴ Notably, in relation to his studies of drug rehabilitants also suffering from structural oppression forestalling the progress of their life projects, Zigon discusses the notion of 'being trapped in a world' (2014b: 757) which contrasts with the fluidity afforded by the dynamics of moral breakdown and ethical response (in his sense), and thus approaching the territory of the 'there is' and the scream. However, he does not use this opportunity to explore the avenues thrown up in the present essay.

in the text marks a turning point in the anthropological theory of moralities. This is where, for instance, Scheper-Hughes (1995) interprets the kind of ethical philosophy that posits a total responsibility to the other – which she finds in the later Levinas²⁵ and which Zigon draws from Logstrup – in order to lend credence to the claim that anthropologists can and in fact ought in special cases be moralizing, ethical and thus possibly activist if they witness suffering that their critical analytical skills can help both identify and, in some cases, potentially alleviate. However, given his original displacement of moralism, Zigon mentions but then skates over the central insight of Logstrup regarding responsibility to the other within his own theory. He retains only the dynamic of demand and response before taking a final turn at Badiou that not only imports 'keep going' into the kernel of his theory as the capstone of 'ethics'. And yet, the mention of Badiou also represents the moment at which another choice is made to keep going by Zigon himself by sideswiping the responsibility to others found in Logstrup in accordance with a hidden moralizing proposition.

The house built on the expunging of the social scientist's moral passions, as much as the house built upon their explicit inclusion, still embodies a moral position (Stoczkowski 2008: 353; Scheper-Hughes 1995: 419). In his fervour to avoid the sin of moralism, Zigon begins his endeavour with a moralizing proposition between the lines,²⁶ which, if it were made explicit, would read something like: 'Moralism in anthropology is bad, and anthropologists (of moralities), while they may well be morally positioned beings, ought not to be moralizing'. Thus, Zigon's own performance of 'ethics' – all of which follow from this initial response, and which, by referring to his own framework, are 'socially constituted ethics' – risk 'defective presentness' (Sontag 1967) in the face of the other's ethical demand by displacing moralism at the outset rather than interrogating the possibilities of a blended model.²⁷ The anthropology of moralities as an ethical response which aims to prescribe future ethical responses by anthropologists to the same problem, and thus also to other humans, builds on the presupposition that anthropologists themselves are, as social 'scientists', exempt from responsibility to the other. Taken seriously, it builds in the possibility of contrived silence in response to the ethical demand of the other, found most acutely in the scream, by setting apart the anthropologist as a 'fearless spectator' (Scheper-Hughes 1995: 419) in name

²⁵ 'Though I veer dangerously toward what some might construe as a latent sociobiology, I cannot escape the following observation: that we are thrown into existence at all presupposes a given, implicit moral relationship to an original (m)other and she to me.' (Scheper-Hughes 1995:419).

²⁶ Preceding that identified by Holbraad earlier.

²⁷ Thus, also quite contrary to spirit of responsibility to the other found in the philosophy of Logstrup.

of science.²⁸ This is despite the fact that anthropology as science is often positioned like few other disciplines to map out situations beyond its inhabitants' own comprehension and thus potentially alleviate suffering thoughtfully. Zigon has been 'misled by restrictive ideas about what would be a 'relevant' response' (Sontag 1967). Inserted into the temporality of Zigon's theory of moralities, the scream as response, while simultaneously turning the theory back upon itself, raises doubts as to the fitness of the project on the grounds of anthropological responsiveness to the scream, thus encouraging a revision of its foundational movement of displacement, if only minimally.

My friends walked on. I stood there, trembling with fright. And I felt a loud, unending scream piercing nature.

(Munch in Heller 1973 in Schwenger 2014: 391)

'To Anthropology, from Meat Prison'

Just as silence sharpens the intellect and senses, allowing oneself to be in a sympathetic relation with the televisual is to attune to one's locus-ness, being hit by and becoming other with images of Earthlings. Anthropology's and ethnography's proclaimed penchant for the mundane only affirms further this call to attunement, in this case, to the extreme mundane. Even the smallest fragments of everyday perception can become portals into the human condition. As should be clear, in the end it isn't the anthropology of moralities that is at issue, unless by that we mean the anthropology of the moralities of anthropologists, the morality and ethics of anthropology (cf. Caduff 2011) and the possibility of anthropology not only of and by, but *for* humanity – a prospect Didier Fassin, wearing his science hat as opposed to his activist one, graciously concedes 'would not be shameful' (2008: 334). The ethical demand of the scream, as presenting itself to the anthropologist – and I write here of the scream both as literally and as figurally as one can without turning into dust – cannot simply be 'studied' forever: it meets us in the same visceral register whence it came.

In Zigon's anthropological theory of moralities, not only is the scream as a non-reflective, autonomic, pre-ethical, bodily response to the moral breakdown ignored, but there exists a hardwired quietism toward the suffering of the other. The scream may be non-communicational in the way we mean it, and yet, on hearing it from the other, touched by the primarily non-conceptual *demand* that the scream provokes in the depths of human being, the

²⁸ A great deal hinges upon the interpretation of and role given to ethical philosophies positing total responsibility to the Other, pivotally that of Levinas's later works, in the broader debate around moral anthropology.

fact remains that we are still 'being asked' (Wentzer 2017: 139). And this is why, in this case, it is anthropology itself that needs to be understood through and as responsiveness, particularly in 'moral' terms.

The discussion of the 'there is' and Schwenger's connecting it to the scream draws upon a foundational aspect of Levinas's philosophy in which the ethics of responsibility to the other are underdeveloped – and yet, when the scream is brought into play, we needn't strain ourselves with any philosophical ethics.²⁹ When watching bodies on screen and hearing screams through speakers, one cannot help but feel for the other, even if only autonomically. However, I argue that hearing screams in our organic proximity but failing to respond ethically to the demand of the other would mean manifesting a defective presentness and thus enacting a moral breakdown for anyone and anthropology alike. Furthermore, the fragment of thought from *Existence and existents* I draw on with and through Schwenger, like the scream, is not moral or intentionally moralizing. However, anthropologically speaking, even though the scream is non-moral and non-communicative, in an 'excessively simplistic' (Stoczkowski 2008: 351), even primitive manner, I take the ethical responsibility to the other to follow quite ordinarily from the demand of the scream. The scream may not in fact be a coded or even an intentional message, but it is a 'distress signal' (Taussig 2009: 273), to which it is, speculatively, and in generic folk terms at least, rude not to respond in kind. So, having found a real downward displacement – and perhaps it is actually Zigon's theory, as well as (momentarily) morality, ethics and culture, that disappears with the scream – ironically, the appropriate ethical response to the latter reappears to problematize the very foundation of the theory viewed through its own programme for study, found in the attempted displacement of moralism. As Schwenger observes, with the real scream 'we have no time to be weary, to consider the interesting philosophical conclusions that can be drawn from such a state. We instinctively want to escape from the trap of our own existence – which we suddenly sense is not our own, never was our own.' (2008: 394). This is something that is forgotten in Zigon's

²⁹ A decade later, Zigon (2018: 140-5) offered a critique of Levinas's ethics of responsibility with particular reference to Barad's involvement of the former in her intra-active ontology of agential realism. It transpires that Zigon may not be bothered by my critique regarding responsibility to the other because he finds this notion to be an overhang of metaphysical humanism that merely reproduces individualism and human exceptionalism, leaving the individual as a prisoner of the ethical demand of the other, which Zigon finds untenable. Where Zigon founds his philosophically legitimate objection to the notion of responsibility to the other on metaphysical and ontological grounds, instead conducting anthropology in a sophisticated realist mode, rather than conceiving of ourselves as metaphysical prisoner of the other, we might prefer to 'bootstrap' (Zeitlyn 2009: 209), referring to our own practical, non-metaphysical understanding of what it is to be a meat prisoner, common to all selves. Transposed from a rather different discussion concerning the adequacy of anthropological understanding, we might ask, with reference to the objections put forward in the present essay, 'If it works on the street why not in the academe?' (Zeitlyn 2009: 214).

framework, but that we should keep in mind when think-feeling through what a moral(izing) anthropology taking responsibility as its basis might be. The scream as response, which we cannot understand without a conception of the lived body as perturbed meat, disrupts the temporality of Zigon's theory, and subsequently, on the grounds of basic human responsibility, also prompts a re-examination of the basic and inadvertently moralizing premise underpinning it. Behind Zigon's theory we find the detached observer, or, in Scheper-Hughes' words, the 'fearless spectator' (1995: 419). In the latter, however, we find a 'witness' (ibid.) accountable to the other, history and thus ultimately the future. Both are ways of seeing, of exploring the world. Clearly, no moral(izing) anthropology, or anthropology of moralities, is sufficient without the other. Inspired by televisual images and the sound of a scream, if we were to follow Zigon's approach, which is principally a prefabrication of a theory of moralities, then surely the last thing we would want to do is to omit this basic responsibility from what amounts to a methodology, nor, deeper than that, a moral and ethical stance toward the world and others. Stepping away from screams, whether in the present from the past and the present, or from the future in the present, is still a moral choice. It is not one we would colour favourably, especially between friends, but nor between 'faceless passer(s)-by' (Taussig 2009: 274). Sometimes our bodies answer for us to the demand of the moral breakdown, and this rarer but nevertheless vital species of response should not be deleted in advance from any anthropological theory of moralities. Given the phenomenology of the scream, at the very least, we ought not to risk defective presentness if we hear it.³⁰ Why and why not, how and how not to engage in social transformation is

³⁰ Adjusting the bootstraps, as a 'hypothetical imperative' (Kant in Beldo 2014: 267), the principle of responsiveness – that is, that even in a scientific capacity 'one ought to respond in kind if one hears a scream' – may only be compelling if the reader is already attuned to this response as a relevant, positively morally valued choice. Yet, notwithstanding inevitable fringe cases (which is why I do not go as far as to espouse this as an unconditional 'ought'), aiming to uphold a minimal standard of decency between individual human beings seems a 'good' enough reason to provisionally accept it. However, as Beldo writes, 'we must recognise that any ought can be embodied, habitual and non-reflective just as easily as it can be explicitly stated, codified, or formally advanced' (2014: 268-9). Perhaps what I have done in part is work from what Parisi, following Whitehead, terms 'propositional feelings' (Parisi 2012: 238) to their crude articulation as a quasi-normative moral 'ought'. Is a usually unreflexive embodied morality being elaborated here, reflected in the claim that it is unusual, and by implication possibly morally wrong, to manifest a defective presentness at the sound of the scream? The sense of morality and/or ethics aligned with in this analysis, grounded in the notion of responsiveness, is couched in the notion of responsibility to the Other. Thus, it is in one sense an ethnocentric notion steeped in a Judeo-Christian ethic and metaphysical humanism. Nevertheless, here, in my view, it matters more that morality/ethics (both to some degree within and beyond Zigon's articulation of these terms), including with reference to the responsibility of anthropology itself, are conceived primarily as social–, in other words, the manner in which feelings, ideas, values and situations coalesce to inform the way we respond in action, to the ethical demand of the Other, with particular reference to our actual or potential role in their well-being. Rather than a recapitulation of individualism, then, there is an 'ethic of community... (situating) the self as a constituent piece of a social network or "office holder" and priz(ing) duty and interpersonal responsibility' (Beldo 2014: 273) is expressed by the 'ought'.

something for another time: no claims are made to this vexed territory at present.³¹ I hope only to have problematized Zigon's original anthropological theory of moralities in order to provoke a visceral re-evaluation of whether, in such framework, the possibility of a moral(izing) anthropology is minimally required, albeit perhaps reserved for extremes.

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³¹ Interestingly, in 2018, now turning away from metaphysical speculations following his critique of responsibility, and inspired by his ethnographic study of drug rehabilitation in Vancouver's Downtown East side, Zigon proposed as part of an 'anthropology of potentiality' (2018: 19) an 'ethics of dwelling and a politics of worldbuilding...not concerned with survival in this world of war...but rather ... focused on building new worlds in which that war no longer exists'(2018: 150). This is admirable, even necessary. Zigon's anthropology of potentiality looking to envision alternative futures emerging from conditions in which the world becomes 'unbearable' (2018: 7) summons (largely implicit) new horizons into view, in and for itself. In light of this more recent offering, I ask that we re-consider the temporality and thus the foundational displacement of Zigon's original theory (which remains a key component of this later work) on the grounds mentioned above, then considering how, as one such alternative possibility in an anthropology of potentiality, and given the inherent ethicality of futures, a collaborative politics of world building might by definition involve a (minimally) moral anthropology.

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FROM ETHNIC SETTLEMENT TO CULTURAL COEXISTENCE:
GERMAN AND JAPANESE GAÚCHOS IN IVOTI AND INDICATORS OF
CULTURALLY SYMBIOTIC PLACE-MAKING

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Abstract

This paper presents an ethnographic account of German and Japanese Brazilians in the municipality of Ivoti, located in the Porto Alegre metropolitan area, the southernmost part of Brazil. The aim of this paper is to show how the regional identity of Rio Grande do Sul, the so-called gaúcho identity, transcends the racial, ethnic and historical backgrounds of immigrant groups. Gaúcho identity functions to create a cultural symbiotic space between German and Japanese Brazilians in the Ivoti municipality. First, this article provides a historical explanation of the construction of the gaúcho identity in Rio Grande do Sul. Then, after providing the history of German and Japanese settlements, I describe how their gaúcho-ness envelops their community. Finally, I conclude with my reflections on their transition from ethnic settlements to cultural coexistence and its connection with pre-existing theories of ethnicity.

Introduction

‘We are all gaúchos here (i.e. in Ivoti). We are very proud of being gaúcho’, said Carlos while drinking *chimarrão*. Carlos is a second-generation Japanese Brazilian living in Ivoti who likes drinking *chimarrão*, an iconic and traditional gaúcho drink that is caffeine-rich and widely drunk in Rio Grande do Sul (henceforth, RS), Argentina and Uruguay. It is usually drunk in a group, using only one *cuia* (a container made of calabash) and one *bomba* (spoon). After someone has taken a drink from the *cuia*, it is passed to the next person. In gaúcho cultural areas, sharing *Chimarrão* as a group represents friendship and fellowship. Carlos is a farmer. Farming is the typical occupation of both Germans and Japanese in Ivoti, which is famous for its flower industry, being called *a cidade das flores* (the city of flowers). Many German and Japanese immigrants and their descendants have been engaging in farming and the production of agricultural goods such as grapes and flowers for Porto Alegre and other states. This is partly because German and Japanese immigrants started their new lives in Rio Grande do Sul as

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farmers. As a municipality of RS, Ivoti has almost two hundred years of history. It was first constructed as a German settlement in the early nineteenth century, the Japanese coming more than a century later.

Ivoti, the research site of this article, is somewhere one can meet a German who likes Japanese culture and language, or a Japanese married to a German partner. My case study of this municipality shows how regional identity is utilized to create ethnic and racial coexistence between ethnically, racially and historically different immigrant groups that live closely together in the same space. The article nonetheless argues that regional identity seems to be prioritized more than Brazilian national identity, and sometimes even more than ethnic identities in particular circumstances where the latter two are not remarkable enough to create a culturally symbiotic place. As a working concept in this article, the term ‘culturally symbiotic place’ represents the creation of peaceful coexistence between different immigrant groups in a particular place under the shared belief. Such places are created not only by acknowledging cultural, racial, ethnic and historical differences, but also by recognizing the culturally circulated commonality between them. In the case of Germans and Japanese in Ivoti, they not only admit the ethno-racial and cultural differences between them, they also strive to strengthen their relationships under their shared belief in the *gaúcho* identity. In this regard, this paper also shows how *gaúcho* identity may transcend race, ethnicity and the different histories of immigration.

This article is based on an ethnographic account of German and Japanese Brazilians in Ivoti. In particular, I pay attention to how both groups construct Ivoti socially as a culturally symbiotic place. The article is structured as follows. I first provide some background to the construction of the *gaúcho* regional identity in RS, especially in terms of its transcendent and metonymic significations. Then, after describing German and Japanese immigration to southern Brazil, I present an ethnographic account of the coexistence of German and Japanese Brazilians within the community.

The symbolization of *gaúcho* identity

To explain the significance of regional identities in Brazil, the characteristics of Brazilian national identity must be covered first. Brazilian national identity, whatever it means for Brazilian people, is too amorphous to be defined using a single definition, especially for immigrants. There might be many individual or group definitions of what it means to be Brazilian, as several scholars studying different racial and ethnic groups have shown (Freyre

1986; Lesser 1999, 2013; Nava and Lauerhass Jr. 2006; Eakin 2017). The literature on Brazilian national identity indicates that being of mixed blood and cultural assimilation between several different ethnic and racial groups is a major part of Brazil's cultural identity. However, viewed from the opposite side, this Brazilian cultural, racial and ethnic mixture, which was strengthened by the influx of several immigrant groups from the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, is an indicator of how much Brazil is different, functioning as a paradise of identity politics. In this regard, Eakin states:

History, geography, culture, language, and economics have reinforced the rise of regional identities within the Brazilian nation. One of the continuing themes in Brazilian history has been the struggle to force these regions into a single nation, a single people. (Eakin 1998: 2)

Then, borrowing Anderson's term, one can argue that Brazil's extreme culture, ethnic and racial differences discourage Brazilians from viewing their national identity as a static identity (Anderson 1991).

Several scholarly works indicate that, given their socio-economic, political, cultural and geographical significance, regional identities are perhaps more profound than national identity in Brazil (Eakin 1998; Blake 2011; Oliven 2006; Reid 2014; Weinstein 2015; Junge 2018). Given regional significance, elites promote and make use of regional identities to achieve regional development and endow their regions with significance. There are several examples of this promotion of regional identity. Through his historical research on *nordestino* (people from the northeast), Blake describes how urban professionals, intellectuals and politicians characterized *nordestinos* objectively and scientifically as an example of regional backwardness and Afro-Brazilian-ness to make this regional identity the object of state-sponsored development projects (Blake 2011). Weinstein argues that, given the promotion of the elite and the popular sector, *Paulista* identity in São Paulo has been historically associated with white-ness, modernity and urbanization, and she shows how the promotion of this *Paulista* identity emerged as a juxtaposition between the more advanced city of São Paulo and other parts of Brazil (Weinstein 2015). Similarly, *gaúcho* identity in RS was promoted by urban intellectuals and traditionalists as a symbol of regional pride in the twentieth century.

The history of the *gaúchos* can be traced back to the seventeenth century. Originally, the word 'gaúcho' denoted a semi-nomadic skilled horseman and cowhand of mixed descent, Spanish and indigenous. *Gaúchos* flourished in the Andean highlands and present-day southern

Brazil, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they had made a living by producing leather and raising livestock, the word ‘gaúcho’ having negative connotations, such as ‘vagabond’, ‘cattle thief’ and ‘ranch peon’. In the early nineteenth century, gaúchos began engaging in wars and fought for Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Later, gaúchos were promoted as folk heroes in legends and literature such as *El Gaúcho Martín Fierro* by José Fernández². In Spanish-speaking America, a gaucho identity emerged in contrast to the colonial and third-world identities created by European countries. Now, it is the principal aspect of both Argentinian and Uruguayan national identity, as well as informing the regional identity of RS in Brazil (Machado 1966; Archetti 2007; Bockelman 2011).

More importantly, in RS, gaúcho culture was promoted by urban intellectuals and traditionalists (Oliven 2000). A movement called the gaúcho traditionalist movement sprang up in RS in the 1980s and 1990s, during the re-democratization period of Brazil’s cultural and political ‘opening up’ (*abertura*). As Oliven points out (2000: 128), in this period there existed a ‘nostalgia for rural life’ that was promoted by the intellectuals and professionals belonging to the urban middle class. As part of this movement, a gaúcho cultural institution called Centro de Tradições Gaúchas (GTG: the centre of gaúcho traditions) appeared. Now there are more than two thousand such centres not only in RS, but in Brazil and even abroad. The movement also provoked market interest in the emerging gaúcho industry (Oliven 2000). Public festivals, traditional barbecue restaurants (*churrascarias*) and gaúcho-style popular music became more prominent in both the public and private spheres (Junge 2018). Gaúcho identity not only has a cultural effect, but also a political effect on citizens in RS. In this regard, Junge argues that ‘recent political discourse in Rio Grande do Sul has linked gaúcho identity with democratic civic participation – to represent the virtue of participation as distinctively gaúcho’ (Junge 2018: 11).

Bornholdt (2016) points out that the descendants of present-day gaúchos are poor ranch workers who lead traditional gaúcho life-styles in rural areas of southern Brazil. Even though the descendants of the original gaúchos now belong to the lower class, the gaúcho identity transcends class differences, as well as racial and ethnic differences. Today, many people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds argue about gaúcho identity and what it generally

² José Fernández is an Argentine writer and journalist, well known as the author of *El Gaúcho Martín Fierro*.

means to be Rio Grandean (people from RS). Now, when one visits Rio Grande do Sul, one realizes that many of the residents there identify themselves as gaúcho because the regional identity functions as a symbol of regional pride and a glorious past. Concerning this symbolic circulation of gaúcho identity, Oliven argues (1999: 107-8):

The inhabitants of RS (Rio Grande do Sul) consider themselves Brazilian by choice, and they like to emphasize their individuality with regard to the rest of Brazil. In the social construction of their identity, they use elements that refer to a glorious past, one dominated by the figure of the Gaúcho.... Today, the word is a patronymic for the citizens of the state of RS.

In this regard, Junge (2018: 11) explains the underlying reason for this invocation:

As both a source of regional pride and as the basis for essentialist stereotyping, present-day invocations of gaúcho-ness have in varying ways embraced the cultural figure of the rural cowboy, the values of independence and bravery, masculine virility, and a desire to be close to the land.

In the process of cultural promotion, gaúcho identity came to have a symbolic meaning to the majority of Rio Grandean. However, its significance lies in the fact that the RS regional identity can incorporate different racial and ethnic groups in the state as Rio Grandean and juxtapose them to the rest of Brazil. This symbolic circulation of the RS regional identity positively affects the sense of togetherness between German and Japanese in Ivoti.

Settlement of German and Japanese immigrants in southern Brazil

The history of German immigration to Brazil started when the Brazilian imperial government created the first German colony, São Leopoldo, in RS in 1824, soon after gaining independence from Portugal in 1822. Even before this time, Brazil's national interest in foreign occupation in the south was triggered by security issues, its export-oriented policies and the elite's racial preferences (Lesser 2013). At the time, there was political and military conflict between Brazil and Argentina, which pushed the border back and forth, as both countries had ambitions for expansion and growth in the nineteenth century. However, since most of Brazil's inhabitants at the time lived on the Atlantic coast, and only indigenous groups lived in the interior of the country,³ the southern interior was especially vulnerable to Argentine expansion. Another

³ Seyferth (1998) argues that the interior of the country was regarded as a 'demographic void' at the

trigger was the elite's belief that Brazil's economy should be more export-oriented in order to take advantage of growing industries such as sugar, cotton and coffee for efficient national growth. Brazilian elites believed that these growing industries and the exportation of their goods would make Brazil a modern nation. By their very nature, these industries required intensive human labour, which meant that the government urgently needed to secure the human resources to keep growth sustainable. In this context, as the southern economy grew, the demand for labour in southern local industries grew with it.

In order to invest labour resources in these growing industries, the elites favoured white immigrants as a way of achieving the whitening of Brazil, as well as promoting national development, the hope being to replace slavery by white immigrants in the future.⁴ Among several candidates as white immigrant groups, the government prioritized German immigrants because Germans were believed to have 'exceptional abilities as farmers and a sense of national pride that would transform immigrants rapidly into devoted Brazilian subjects' (Lesser 2013). German immigration to the south brought several benefits to Brazil. The Germans transformed unused lands in the south into agriculturally productive areas, and they were also regarded as an asset when it came to creating a self-organized, docile and principled German-Brazilian army against the Argentine expansion. Land allocations by the government in the case of the German immigrants was treated as a policy of colonization, and it functioned as the engine of German immigration to Brazil, especially to the south.

On the other hand, there were other contributing factors on the side of Germany and Europe concerning German immigration to southern Brazil. In the early nineteenth century, Germany was suffering from overpopulation, poverty and the effects of the Napoleonic war, issues that were especially problematic in rural areas. Furthermore, the market transformation caused by the industrial revolution replacing the manual labour force intensified poverty in Germany (Yukihiko 2007). Under these circumstances, in 1824 the first group of Germans migrated to São Leopoldo through the colonization policy. In 1829, the imperial government established three more official German colonies in other southern states, São Pedro da Alcântara and Mafra in Santa Catarina, and Rio Negro in Paraná (Seyferth 1998). Overall, the vast area of unused

time, regardless of the existence of the indigenous groups.

⁴ Lesser (1999, 2013) points out that Brazilian governmental elites also promoted official immigration from all over the world to make good the labour shortages caused by the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888.

land in the south and the government's land-allocation policy attracted impoverished Germans from rural Germany. The immigrants were called *colonos*, the social identity used to welcome immigrant peasants at that time.

The German settlements played an important part in preserving German ethnic culture because they were located distant from urban areas. In these settlements, the Brazilian cultural presence was scarce, preserving them from cultural assimilation. Schools, religion and language were also important in the making of a German-Brazilian ethnic identity. For instance, German-language newspapers first appeared in the 1860s. Along with German settlers, priests and pastors accompanied them in their immigration and established churches, both Catholic and Lutheran, in their own settlements. Community schools where German was the language of instruction were also built in each settlement. Although these examples are too numerous to mention here, all establishments of this kind led to the preservation of *Deutschtum*, or Germanhood (Seyferth 1998; Eppelmann 2018).

As the underlying reason for the preservation of German ethnicity and culture, Willems argues that a shared memory of colonization and the contribution of the pioneer generations, both of which are regarded as ethnic symbols, are the two most important elements of German efforts to preserve their own ethnicity and culture (Willems 1946). Suffice it to say that in the very first phase of immigration the German settlers strove to create a small Germany on the new frontier, their pioneering efforts being mystified subsequently as a shared ethnic history and embedded in Brazilian-born Germans' subjectivities. Allocated land by the government much later, Japanese immigrants also followed this settler-colonialism-like path of immigration. Although German immigration to Brazil was less than to the USA, it played an important part in changing the demography of southern Brazil. According to Kent, at the end of the nineteenth century, there were 150,000 to 200,000 Germans in southern Brazil (Kent 2006). Now, over ten million German Brazilians live in Brazil, with significant numbers in the south.

Japanese immigration to Brazil started almost a century after German immigration began. 2018, when I conducted my fieldwork, was one of the more memorable years in the history of Japanese immigration to Brazil, of which it was the 110th anniversary, having started in 1908 with just 781 Japanese immigrants. Just as German migrants were pushed and pulled by internal and external factors, so Japanese immigration to Brazil also had a number of different influences. In a non-fiction work called *Sōbō*, by Tatsuzo Ishikawa (1951), who also went on board an immigration ship to Brazil to interview Japanese Brazilians and record their life-styles

in Brazil, it is written that Japanese immigrants had high expectations about their new lives in the New World and were quite positive and happy about their choice to immigrate. However, scholarly works also argue that at the time the Japanese government had been concerned by problems of overpopulation and poverty in rural areas at the very time when it was striving to modernize and westernize Japan⁵ (Tsuda 2003; Nishida 2017).

On the other hand, because of the national issue of the labour shortage due to the abolition of slavery in 1888 and constant protests and riots among European immigrants, the Brazilian government sought a new source of labour to sustain the growth of the country's principal industries such as coffee. One of the Japanese government's posters promoting immigration at that time said, 'Let's go! Take your family to South America!', with a brave Japanese man holding a hoe in his left hand and with his family on his right arm. The poster presents the expectation of new opportunities, possibilities and hopes for Japanese immigrants in South America. The poster's representation is partly realistic, as many Japanese decided to emigrate themselves to enrich their families and start a new life. However, the underlying dynamics of the Japanese government's promotion of immigration were its desire to depopulate impoverished rural areas as part of the process of western modernization by encouraging young people and their children to emigrate. Brazil, conversely, took this opportunity to welcome them as westernized, culturally white and very hard-working immigrants, making them the ideal work-force for coffee plantations (Lesser 2013).

At the beginning of their immigration, Japanese immigrants faced harsh working environments and quasi-slave-like treatment on coffee plantations because they were just a replacement for the former slaves as far as coffee-plantation owners were concerned. Because of their harsh treatment, many Japanese immigrants escaped from their plantations, and some of them petitioned the immigration office to be allowed to return to Japan. Even worse, the Great Depression caused the collapse of the once stable Brazilian coffee industry, which functioned as the engine of Japanese immigration. The price of coffee beans fell on the international market, and fewer Japanese immigrants and their descendants were needed by plantation owners than before the Great Depression. Affected by the latter, Japanese immigrants started to shift their profit-making activities to their own agricultural entrepreneurship in the 1930s and helped each other create Japanese settlements (Kinshichi

⁵ The political reawakening of Japan started in 1868, when the new imperial government replaced the old Japanese shogunate monarchy.

2000). They imported the seeds of Japanese crops into Brazil and succeeded in adapting them to Brazil's red soil. As in the case of German immigrants, this early generation of Japanese immigrants established their settlements in relatively isolation from Brazilian society. They engaged in the large-scale farming of cotton, rice and several Japanese vegetables that had not existed in Brazil before. Later, these settlements were called *colônia* and functioned as ethnic enclaves, as in the previous example of German settlement in Brazil.

Japanese immigration to Brazil continued until the 1970s, although it was temporarily suspended because Japan and Brazil were on opposite sides in World War II. In 1953, Japan and Brazil restarted the immigration programme. Post-war Japanese immigrants can largely be categorized as technological or agricultural immigrants. Japanese immigration to Rio Grande do Sul began in the 1960s. Compared to the number of Japanese Brazilians in other states the Japanese population of RS is smaller, but nonetheless approximately thirty thousand Japanese immigrants and their descendants reside in the state today. The focus of this paper is on those who came to RS as agricultural immigrants. Given land by the state government in the post-war period, they settled in *colônias* and initiated large-scale agriculture. One example is *a colônia japonesa de Ivoti* ('the Japanese settlement of Ivoti').

Overall, the history of German and Japanese immigration is similar in that Germans and Japanese both established their own homogenous settlements, a small Germany and a small Japan, in their new land. Their settlement preserved their own ethnic identities and functioned as a suitable environment for passing on to the next generation. Ivoti, located around the area of the first German colony of São Leopoldo, first had a distinctly German character. The *colônia japonesa de Ivoti* also had Japanese characteristics at first. The gaúcho identity had an important role in integrating these two other identities into the gaúcho community.

A brief history of *gaúchismo* in Ivoti

With a population of twenty thousand, Ivoti is a municipality located in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre, next to the larger municipality of Novo Hamburgo (New Hamburg). Although the area had been explored by *brandeirantes* (profit-seeking explorers) in the eighteenth century, its first immigrants were a wave of Germans who settled in the area of present-day Ivoti in 1826. They received land through the government's colonization policy, but to begin with these German immigrants suffered in the tropical climate of southern Brazil because they were from Hunsrück, a low mountain range in the Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany. In the nineteenth century, this area functioned as a place for the *entrepôt* trade where farmers could

exchange things in shortage at home, such as fabrics. In 1867 the area was named Bom Jardim ('Good Garden') and was incorporated into São Leopoldo as its third district. Later, in 1938, since the land was suitable for the production of high-quality flowers, the name Bom Jardim was changed to Ivoti, from *yvoty*, 'flower', in the local Guarani language.

As the economy and population grew, Ivoti was separated from São Leopoldo and became a municipality in 1964. The municipality decided to accept 26 Japanese families in 1966 because the municipal leaders wanted to set *um belo exemplo de diversidade cultural* ('a beautiful example of cultural diversity'), according to the municipal history.⁶ These Japanese families produce grapes, kiwi fruit, vegetables and flowers. The first-generation Japanese immigrants lived in the Japanese settlement called *colônia japonesa de Ivoti*, but as further generations went by, their descendants moved to the municipal centre or the state capital.

Ivoti was first established as a German settlement. Even today it is still regarded as a German municipality, given its approximately two hundred years of history. Before Ivoti was established, German settlers lived in the area, only undertaking commercial interactions with others when necessary. Although they struggled to adjust to the local environment, they managed to establish a base for living in the new land. They built communal organizations such as a school, a church and even the municipal office, keeping their distance from the centre of Brazilian society. This led to the retention of *Deutschtum* among their descendants. However, the municipal practice of accepting migrants from abroad and other Brazilian states, as in the example of Japanese immigration to the municipality in the latter half of the twentieth century, diluted the communal homogeneity that had prevailed hitherto and replaced it with the notion of the 'beautiful example of cultural diversity'. Carlos, a descendant of a German immigrant, remarked:

When my dad was a kid, some Japanese came to Ivoti. It was a long time ago. We get along with each other now, but when they came here, people must have reacted like, 'Oh, Japanese came to Ivoti !?' My father was saying it was a bit surprising when he first heard of it. Later, we realized that Japanese are so gaúcho. They are hard-working, serious, and very focused on their things, just like us (German). I have some Japanese friends here, and we get along with each other very well. Also, I like going to their *feira* (market) and eating Japanese food there.

Strictly speaking, the twenty-six Japanese families mentioned earlier did not initially settle

⁶ The history of Ivoti is described on the municipal website: <http://www.ivoti.rs.gov.br/historia>

down in the centre of the municipality, nor did they assimilate into the community at the beginning. Receiving land from the state government, the first generation of Japanese immigrants went to the suburbs to start a new life. Only then did they create the *colônia japonesa de Ivoti*. Their own Japanese agricultural community adjoined the municipality, having similar characteristics to the German settlements. Although it is not certain how deep the interaction between Germans and Japanese was in this period, this Japanese community was built to sustain the Japanese group through the first phase of its immigration. Within the settlement, the immigrants established a communal school, held regular meetings and sports events, and instituted a *Memorial da Colônia Japonesa* (a ‘Museum of the Japanese colony’ in Ivoti), where visitors can learn about the pioneering activities and memories of the first generation of Japanese settlers.

However, despite being relative newcomers to the community, Japanese immigrants and descendants have good relationships with the German descendants. Germans and Japanese hold markets called *feiras*, where, they sell German and Japanese traditional foods and sometimes other products as well. They frequently visit each other’s *feiras* and enjoy German and Japanese culture. They also had a football team with both German and Japanese players. Yet, it is not only these materialistic and visible examples that represent communal solidarity between German and Japanese. They have a harmonious relationship because, unlike the first generation, which only retained a Japanese ethnic identity, Japanese descendants have gradually come to regard themselves as *gaúchos*.

In this context, Masaru, a second-generation Japanese Brazilian, claimed that here the Japanese have *o orgulho dos gaúchos* (‘the gaúcho pride’). Another Japanese descendant, Maria, also remarked: ‘I think I am Japanese, but maybe more importantly, I am gaúcho because I was born here’. She placed greater importance in her gaúcho pride because being gaúcho is a cultural prerequisite for human relationships in Ivoti, creating a commonality between herself and others, especially Germans, and thus transcending both race and ethnicity. She continued by saying that RS is very different from the rest of Brazil, a remark indicating a radically different feature of this regional identity. In relation to her remark, Harold, a Japanese descendant from Ivoti, reported:

One time I went to some sort of agricultural conference. I met Japanese from other states. I felt that we (Japanese from RS) and other Japanese are very different. Maybe, we are gaúcho and others may be proud of their region, too. I think that is how Brazil works. Brazilian people tend to judge

others by where they are from, and I also tend to do that.

‘We (gaúchos) are different’, said German and Japanese residents in Ivoti. This remark implies that if one retains a strong regional identity, it will differentiate one from others even in the same immigrant group. Another German descendant mentioned that RS is different from other states because ‘We are more westernized and whiter’. As their remarks imply, gaúcho identity has the power to transcend race, ethnicity, and cultural and historical backgrounds. It does not matter where one’s ancestors are from as long as they were born in RS. This identity provides the individual descendants of immigrants with a sense of difference from others. Beyond the regional level, this power also can detach individuals from the Brazilian national identity. Felipe, a German descendant from Ivoti, reflected on this as follows:

I have no problem with Japanese here. We have a lot in common. Germans can be gaúcho and Japanese, too. However, I don’t like Brazil. When I visited Germany, I didn’t like the way people judged me. They think I’m Brazilian. In a way, there is the impression that Brazilians are lazy and always play and dance around outside, right? We (Germans) here are so different from normal Brazilians. Of course, I like the beaches and root for the Brazilian national team during the World Cup, but I prefer gaúcho identity because I feel it is closer to my mindset.

Junge argues that ‘invocations of “gaúcho-ness” have long been deployed to assert the state’s historical relationship – in political, economic, and cultural terms – with the rest of the country’ (Junge 2018: 11). The discourse of ‘We are different’, not only from others in other regions, but also from Brazil as a whole, is embedded in the German and Japanese regional mindset. In RS, the gaúcho identity functions as a *status group* (Weber 1978). Individuals embrace it for the sake of their own values and communal solidarity. Having a gaúcho identity does not make them lose their ethnicity. Rather, they can be German and Japanese, and at the same time they can be differentiated from other Brazilian people while preserving communal solidarity. The significance of ‘gaúcho’ as a status group is that it is not incorporated into the same ethnicity. Rather, it consists of different ethnic and racial groups with the same belief and regional philosophy that being gaúcho is a good thing to be. Invocations of gaúcho identity lead to communal solidarity in Ivoti. In this context, Ignacio, a philosopher of German descent living in Ivoti, added: ‘If the German and Japanese identify themselves as gaúcho, they can share the same beliefs, world views, celebrations, and so on, despite having a different background to be proud of being gaúcho’.

One day, I was invited to a local agricultural festival called 'Jogos Ruais', where an agricultural community consisting of three municipalities, including Ivoti, meet to celebrate their efforts by holding several events associated with agriculture. The festival is meant for practising gaúcho traditions and keeping the communal ties strong. The finale of the festival was a traditional gaúcho dance by the children of German and Japanese descent, signifying that the community was united under the name 'gaúcho'. Ivoti was first constructed as a settlement by German immigrants in the nineteenth century, where a group of Japanese immigrant families joined them roughly a century later. As Ignacio explains, the communal basis of Ivoti is that, ethnically and historically, different groups of German and Japanese align themselves with the shared and circulated value of gaúcho identity.

Conclusion: the construction of a culturally symbiotic place

The construction of a community such as Ivoti can be regarded as a new phase, or another path, of immigrant settlement in Brazil, which indicates the formation of a culturally symbiotic place and tolerant acceptance of newcomers by means of a shared belief. Finally, I conclude this historical and ethnographic account of German and Japanese settlement in Ivoti with some reflections on three traditional theories of ethnicity: primordialism, instrumentalism and social constructionism, to suggest another path to understanding immigrant settlement. Each theory can be used essentially to grasp settlement patterns and changes to identity construction step by step, although there may be significant exceptions and criticisms, since this is a new scholarly endeavour in progress.

Although many scholars have already shown that ethnicity is an equivocal entity (Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Banks 1996; Barth 1998; Eriksen 2010), these scholarly contributions established several approaches to analysing the vagueness of ethnicity, although arguing whether or not these approaches made ethnicity vague or whether ethnicity was vague from the beginning is something of a chicken-and-egg problem. However that may be, primordial and instrumental approaches substantiate the early immigration phase, while the social constructionist approach is a practical way of grasping the assimilation of immigrant descendants into Brazilian society and the resulting complications to their ethnic identity.

First of all, although somewhat paradoxically, primordialism argues that ethnicity is a taken-for-granted entity fixed across time. There were two leading scholars of this primordialism: Clifford Geertz and Pierre Van den Berghe. Geertz pointed out an inexplicable aspect of ethnicity, namely that humans are innately driven by 'primordial attachment' and that

their innate affiliation with ethnicity is 'ineffable' (Geertz 1973). On the other hand, using socio-biological perspectives, Van den Berghe argued that humans practice ethnic nepotism, meaning they are more favourable to close-kin relationships, which leads to the formation of a homogenous community (Van den Berghe 1986, 1987). Their perspectives are similar in that they both regard the human representation of ethnicity as a natural phenomenon driven by an innate tendency.

Instrumentalism argues that the representation of ethnicity is not natural, in that it is manipulated by the political intentions of those in power. Ethnicity is utilized by elites to strengthen communal solidarity and its characteristics. Therefore, instrumentalists pay attention to the institutional practices and manipulation that formulates ethnicity in a particular group (Hobsbawm 1983; Brass 1985, 1991; Gellner 2008). State propaganda and national education are examples of instrumentalism.

Lastly, social constructionism is the concept associated with individual identity politics. It looks at how individuals negotiate with society to maximize their gains in respect of citizenship, equality and human rights as a means of rebelling against social discrimination. Some claim that social constructionism describes contemporary Brazilian society, together with all its racial, ethnic and cultural differences. In this regard, Kearney sums the matter up as follows (2012: 42):

In Brazil, ethnicity is a powerful element of local and national history and is likely to have arrived at its present state as something that is not merely a maintenance of what is remembered or drawn from social memory, nor is it exclusively a metaphor of unity drawn from ancestral connection and innateness. Quite the opposite, ethnicity in Brazil is a negotiated terrain, a work in progress, in which individuals and collectives seek to distinguish the character of their ethnic loyalty in relation to contemporary politics around rights and equity, colour, and nationalism.

Being extremely heterogeneous, Brazil offers several opportunities and incentives for individual identity formation: national identity, regional identity, race, ethnicity and history are all related to the power dynamics that further complicate the diversity. Certainly, Brazilians today, who are the descendants of immigrants, including slaves, have several racial and ethnic backgrounds. Social constructionism therefore seems to be the best way of examining identity politics in Brazilian society. However, concerning the transformation of immigrant ethnic identities, it is also the case that the different approaches to ethnicity can explain its pattern. The case of Ivoti suggests a new possibility for identity construction.

Primordial and instrumental approaches explain the early phase of immigrant settlement. Immigrants often migrate to a new land as a group. Even though they may not receive land from the local authorities, they still establish their own settlements in which they create their own educational, cultural and ethnic establishments, such as schools, churches and even local political systems. For endogenous purposes, as Van den Berghe argues, as they strive to increase their numbers, marriage is usually conducted within the community. It is through all these endeavours that their home ethnicity is preserved within the community and is taken over by the next generation. In periods of the less intense cultural assimilation of the new lands, early immigrant generations strive to preserve their home ethnicity because it is more comfortable for them or ineffably 'natural', to borrow Geertz's term, or because they are innately driven by ethnic nepotism, to cite van den Berghe again. Thus German immigrants succeed in preserving their Germanness, as did Japanese immigrants. In fact, in the case of immigration to Brazil, not only Germans and Japanese but also Italians, Chinese, Jews, Arabs and Koreans, that is, most immigrant groups in Brazil, established some sort of ethnic enclave (Lesser 1999, 2013). Primordialism and instrumentalism thus explain the early phase of immigrant settlement, which is characterized by the socio-biological, cultural and political aims of preserving their ethnicity among the pioneer generations.

Nevertheless, immigrant descendants do eventually enter into the society of their new land and also come to represent its national identity. Although whether descendants themselves try to assimilate into the society or the society urges them to do so is another chicken-and-egg problem, the socio-cultural assimilation of immigrants' descendants can be regarded as a new phase in identity construction. In the case of immigrants' descendants in Brazil, some individuals retain a dual identity, such as German-Brazilian, Japanese-Brazilian, Italian-Brazilian, Chinese-Brazilian, and so forth. As such, their ethnic identity becomes hyphenated and more complex. In this phase, on the one hand they proclaim their sameness to others in the society, but on the other hand they do not forget their ethnic subjectivity. They do not instrumentalize their ethnic identity, nor is it produced by any innate tendency or desire for psychological comfort in this phase. Rather, individuals construct their own ethnic identities.

However, the case of Ivoti gives us a picture of German and Japanese Brazilians trying to make Ivoti a culturally symbiotic place under the shared regional belief in the *gaúcho*. This practice differs from individual identity politics, which merely argues and perceives differences in relation to others. Rather, it can be regarded as the utilization of a shared belief and identity to establish a peaceful coexistence. Different groups of immigrants perceive differences

between them, but what is more important is the shared gaúcho identity for formulating a place like Ivoti. To view things from the opposite side, the ability of the gaúcho identity to transcend differences of race, ethnicity and the past makes this creation of a community possible, enveloped by its power. Cultural placemaking of this kind will appear under circumstances where different groups have a positive value towards their common beliefs, but such placemaking will be another possible phase or path in immigrant identity politics, being radically different from merely representing ethnic and racial differences. However, further research is needed into this topic.

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THE BAKKARWAL OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR:
NEGOTIATING THE COMMONS
ANITA SHARMA¹

Scholarship on the commons has evolved to be nothing less than the Hydra of the academy. The scope of the ‘traditional’ commons, such as land, forests, grasslands, wetlands, groundwater and air, has swelled to include ‘contemporary’ commons, such as the knowledge commons, digital commons, urban commons, spiritual commons, cultural commons, and health and education commons, and there is also the idea of the new and old commons. The study of the commons has thus moved to exploring the multiple, shifting and contested geographies of the commons that are not ‘out there’, but are socially constructed through a myriad contestations, remonstrations and negotiations. This process of commons creation, or ‘commoning’, which shapes socio-spatial structures and dynamics, becomes an emergent, generative dynamic in processes of regional identity-building, place-making and much else.

In a recent book exploring the history and contemporary state of the commons in the UK, Standing (2019: 60) expounds on the significance of the commons in our lives: “A thriving commons — not just encompassing natural environment and its uses and resources, but our public services and amenities, our social and justice systems, and our cultural and intellectual life — is just as vital for a good society today as access to the commons was in the medieval times.”

For Wall (2014) the idea of the commons refers to an ecological space developed through the cultural foundations of an economic system. It is derived not simply through the market rationality of cost and benefit, but also consisting of culturally embedded social obligations that go beyond the formalist framework of material improvement. It is also a management practice which should be evaluated neither from the perspective of a ‘tragedy’ of mismanagement and greed nor as a remedy for our social and ecological problems. Rather, Wall is of the view that the commons should be understood as a particular form of property ownership wherein rights in property are the route to understanding sustainability, and where the notion of sustainability is understood culturally, and culture as something ‘innately political’ (2014: 70). Wall notes, ‘We might conclude that culture, in its diverse manifestations from religion to apparently scientific discourse, is to some extent a product of conflict and the different desires of different social groups.’

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Following on from Wall, this paper tries to understand the commons as a process of claims-making (and unmaking) in the context of the pastoral nomadic Gujjar and Bakkarwal of Kashmir, India.

The dramatic changes that took place in Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019 were pushed through with the sine qua non that they will ensure the progress and development of the minorities; thus far marginalized groups such as women, dalits, tribals and nomads, will stand to gain significantly from the shift. However, the de-operationalization of Article 370, which removed the separate constitution of the erstwhile state and merged it fully with India as a so-called union territory on August 5, has left most people, including the tribal communities in Jammu and Kashmir, bewildered.

Gujjar and Bakkarwal

The Gujjar and their sub-group, the Bakkarwal, both semi-nomadic and nomadic pastoral tribes, claim historical invisibility and disadvantage when it comes to being counted as state citizens. The communities themselves claim to constitute about 20% of Jammu and Kashmir's population, whereas the 2011 Census pegs their numbers at 11.5%. As the apparatus of the state functions through stationary outposts such as the hamlet, cluster, village and town, census officials do not trek up to mountain pastures and other commons to count the Bakkarwal, who migrate as entire families to high mountain pastures above the tree-line every summer. Additionally, the census in Jammu and Kashmir is invariably conducted in the summer months, when most of the nomads are in the highlands and thus are not counted. Ironically, this is irrespective of the fact that the government runs 'mobile schools' that, at least on paper, operate in these pastures throughout the summer with a travelling teacher issued with a school tent and other minimum paraphernalia.

The Gujjar and Bakkarwal of Jammu and Kashmir only started to receive the benefits of reservation in the early 1990s. The government of India extended job and educational reservation to the Gujjar and Bakkarwal in 1991, since when a trickle of the educated from the community have elbowed their way into government jobs and state politics.

Some people in Jammu and Kashmir are of the opinion that it is the Gujjar, Bakkarwal and other tribals who stand to gain most significantly by the shift in the region's status. However, the intangible benefits that revolve around power, politics and identity will be contingent upon the level of maturity of governance and politics in this new union territory and its evolution in the near future.

Apart from about 47,000 Gaddis in Doda District, who are all Hindus, all the tribals in Jammu and Kashmir are Muslims. The Bakkarwal herd goats and sheep, while the Gujjar raise cows and buffaloes and are spread across almost every district in Jammu and Kashmir, with a sizeable presence

in Rajouri and Poonch Districts, and large numbers in parts of Reasi and Doda Districts and some parts of the Kashmir Valley.

The thirty-odd years of strife and turmoil in Jammu and Kashmir have pushed many nomads to settle down. Many found themselves caught between the excesses of the military on the one hand and the brutality of the separatists on the other. Yet, a large number continue to remain nomadic. They continue to practice nomadic pastoralism because, given their low educational qualifications and absence of landed property, they accrue the highest economic and social returns only in their current way of life. Sedentarization also implies a certain estrangement from their wider clan members, a move towards assimilation to majority populations and a dilution of their sense of self and identity. While this gives rise to novel relations and new formations, hyphenated identities and even a certain sense of continuity, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that most of those who sedentarize do not do so entirely willingly, also feeling alienated from the majority populations in both Jammu and Kashmir.

The Bakkarwal are seen as ‘brutish, dirty and dim-witted’ by the majority in the Valley, and the term ‘Gujjar’ is a loaded and frequently used swear word. Additionally, most Gujjar and Bakkarwal are seen as being against the ideology of *azadi* or freedom from India, which has further alienated them from the separatist Kashmiris in the Valley. On the other hand, in the last few years, they have increasingly been othered as Muslims by the Hindu Dogris of Jammu, with whom they earlier shared a warmer relationship. The Kathua rape case is symptomatic of the deteriorating relationship with the Hindus in the Jammu region.² The Gujjar and Bakkarwal have thus had little option but to sit on the fence and remain voiceless spectators of the changing events in Jammu and Kashmir.

The cyber commons and social media that have been so adroitly accessed and managed by the Kashmiri population in the Valley remain out of reach to the Gujjar and Bakkarwal owing to a tacit gagging order. They are told that if they make a wrong move they will face the same fate as was meted out to the Kashmiri Pandits in the 1990s.³ In the years and decades when the Gujjar and Bakkarwal were tormented and tortured in the strife in Kashmir, their issues were seldom mentioned by

² See, for example, ‘Neither Jammu, nor Kashmir: Bakkarwals who’ve come into focus after the Kathua rape case need to be given citizenship’. Anita Sharma, *Firstpost*, 10 June 2019. See: <https://www.firstpost.com/india/neither-jammu-nor-kashmir-bakarwals-who-ve-come-into-focus-after-the-kathua-rape-case-need-to-be-given-citizenship-4431193.html>, accessed 15 July 2020.

³ Rumoured to be the biggest internal migration of Indians since India’s independence and Partition, the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley was prompted by the brutal torture, murder, rape and terror inflicted on Kashmiri Pandits by the majority in the Valley. 95% of the Pandits are reported to have fled the Valley in and around 1990 after separatist militancy increased (Pandita 2017). For a critically acclaimed first-person account written by journalist Rahul Pandita, who was fourteen years old when his family became refugees in Jammu, see *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* (Pandita 2017). Pandita left with his family soon after an iron rod was pierced through Bhushan Lal Raina’s skull before ‘they drag him out, strip him and nail him to a tree’ (2017: 72). Hundreds of Pandits were ‘picked up selectively and put to death’ (2017: 72). Pandita laments that neither the Indian state nor the otherwise influential and vociferous intellectual class did anything to help the Pandits or give voice to their plight, as they were afraid of being branded unsecular.

the local or national media. Newspapers, radio and television, labelled as the ‘old’ media, has long been known to ‘privilege powerful and institutionalized actors, exclude smaller institutions and civil society and essentially circumvent public debate’, while the internet has become a ‘new’ significant medium (Gerhards and Schäfer 2010: 3, Habermas 1989). For the Gujjar and Bakkarwal, however, self-censorship was the outcome, as in these contexts the cyber commons too are intertwined in historically specific cultural and political formulations. Indeed, on further exploration, Gerhards and Schäfer (2010) reveal that in fact ‘search engines might actually silence societal debate by giving more space to established actors and institutions, to experts and to expert evaluations and views, thereby replicating pre-existing power structures online (ibid.: 14). Additionally, there is a need to perceive how the subjective intentionality that has been identified as foundational of a public sphere is enfeebled in an atmosphere of fear, signalling the boundaries of the cyber public sphere. Whether Jammu and Kashmir’s dissolution as a state of the Indian union and its reconfiguration as a union territory will increase the precarity the Gujjar and Bakkarwal currently face remains to be seen.

The landmark agrarian reforms in Jammu and Kashmir, starting from the 1950s and continued later in the 1970s, known as the state’s Land to the Tillers Act, indeed changed the lives of landless agricultural labourers in Kashmir, and few Kashmiri farmers are now landless. Kaw writes, ‘The land reforms registered a landmark in Kashmir history. The hitherto feudal order was eliminated in all its forms and manifestations. Land was transferred to the actual tillers along with a host of rights and titles of a permanent nature. The rights so conferred restored confidence and promoted love for the land among the peasantry’ (Kaw 2008: 232). The lands on which nomads have been grazing their cattle were never regularized in their name, and they continue to access state land for their needs.

In 2018 the State Administrative Council (SAC), headed by Governor Satya Pal Malik, also repealed the Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act 2001, popularly known as the Roshni Act. This was a setback to the Gujjar and Bakkarwal, as the Act had vested the ownership of land in its occupants. The scrapping of the Act has triggered anxiety among the Gujjar and Bakarwal, the state’s largest landless community. The Roshni Act offered them the hope of owning the lands they had lived on and used as pasture for generations. However, not many members of these poor communities could pay for the land or had the political influence and muscle to speed up the allocation process. Most were not even aware of the requisite procedures, and large parts of their former grazing lands have now been occupied by others. It is said that a big chunk of grazing land was handed out to offices, NGOs, universities and other institutions.

The forces of conflict, insecurity and resource degradation operate in mutually reinforcing ways. In this larger scenario of violence, mistrust and insecurity, the Gujjar and Bakkarwal have been pushing for implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition

of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (or FRA) in the state. Although the bill was tabled in 2018 under the government of Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) and the BJP, the law was not passed. That is, it was not extended to Jammu and Kashmir, as Article 370 specifies that central laws first have to be ratified by the state assembly.

Now the silver lining in this dark picture is that the removal of the state's constitution paves the way for the FRA to be implemented in what is now a union territory. The Act was a measure to safeguard the particularly marginalized class of forest-dwellers, tribals and nomads and to address their predicament relating to access to the environmental commons with their right to life and livelihood.

The urgency for the law to be passed in Jammu and Kashmir was reinforced by the rape and brutal murder of Asifa, a Bakkarwal girl, as the Hindu Dogra men involved in the crime were believed to have been trying to expel the Bakkarwal from the forest area where they lived every winter. This was an area to which they had not only customary claims but also individual property in the village, as well as de facto rights to the village and the forest commons.

Following this incident, a suspicion was created to the effect that a certain demographic change was being manoeuvred by the PDP government through the expansion and sedentarization of the Muslim Bakkarwal into the forest areas of the Jammu region, a view that is at variance with the fairly harmonious co-existence of Hindu and Muslim groups in the region for decades.

The Gujjar and Bakkarwal now have to contend with the fact that they will also be competing with tribals from all across India for jobs from the reservation quota, while earlier they only had to compete with tribals from within the state. Far more daunting to them, however, is the fear that their migratory routes and pastures might be usurped by competing private interests that might inundate the Valley, now that access to citizens from across India is no longer barred.

There is ample evidence in the literature to show that when development beckons it is first and foremost land from the commons that is parcelled out for the creation of new infrastructure. This has already been in evidence in Jammu and Kashmir, where the Gujjar and Bakkarwal are being uprooted and sometimes violently evicted to pave the way for the new institutions that are emerging in the region. Around 1,200 *kanal*⁴ of grazing land has been given to Jammu University by Mendhar administrative district. In the Rajouri region, around 800 *kanal* of land has been put aside for Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University. At least 253 nomadic families have been asked to move out of large tracts of land in Vijaypur for the establishment of the proposed All India Institute of Medical Sciences. The commons that the Gujjar and Bakkarwal rely on for their livelihoods are gradually

⁴ In the survey system, one *kanal* is equal to 0.0505857 ha.

being privatized and turned into commodities, with the meaning of property itself emerging as a contested terrain. Grasslands are ‘deemed unowned and unownable on the one hand’ and to be private property backed up by powerful players with legal documentation on the other (Wily 2013, describing the comparable case of the Kuchi and Hazara in Afghanistan).

How can the Bakkarwal lay claim to their customary commons when the fundamental underlying prerequisite for a commons even existing, which is the community, is itself being pushed into a downward spiral? There is a growing recognition that conflict will intensify in the future as low-intensity warfare, not between but within nations, will be driven by issues of unequal access to resources, especially land (Moran and Ostrom 2005); many nomads are selling off their animals, settling down wherever they can and becoming a scattered, disembodied people. Moreover, what strategies can the Bakkarwal employ when the exclusivity that is built into the very understanding of the land and water commons is at stake and in danger of being thrown wide open?

The FRA and the issue of nomads

Since its successful tabling and passage, the Forest Rights Act has seen a variety of political applications across states in India. In many cases it has indeed been successful in securing the livelihoods of those who are reliant on the forests. This is particularly so in light of the eviction of traditional ‘forest dwellers’ when their forms of livelihood are classified as ‘encroachments’ on forest land marked out as reserved forest or forest sanctuaries. A community’s access to the benefits accruing from this act is mediated by two possible categories of inclusion within it: ‘Scheduled Tribe’ and ‘Other Forest Dweller’.

Inclusion under the category of ‘Scheduled Tribe’ allows the community a degree of autonomy over the process of deciding what acts might constitute ‘encroachments’ on forest land and what might be seen as maintaining or ‘preserving’ the balance of ecology in the forest. This autonomy is itself based on guarantees afforded by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, Article 244, Part X, on ‘autonomous areas or tribal areas’. Inclusion under the ‘Other Forest Dweller’ category, on the other hand, requires the setting up of a *gram sabha*.

A *gram sabha* is a village assembly bringing together all the adult members of the village in states having no *panchayats*, *padas*, *tolas* or other traditional village institutions or elected village committees. It allows full and unrestricted participation by women (Forest Rights Act, 2006).

The term ‘nomadic’ appears five times in the Act, always as a description of a mode of economy or subsistence specific to the group. For example, the second section of the Act, which discusses the kinds of forest-based livelihood activities it is looking to secure, places nomadic activities among

‘other community rights of uses or entitlements such as fish and other products of water bodies, grazing (both settled or transhumant) and traditional seasonal resource access of nomadic or pastoralist communities’ However, the difficulties faced by the Gujjar and Bakkarwal have largely concerned how the Act should be interpreted and how the community should best be represented. Inclusion under the category of ‘Other Forest Dweller’ creates the risk that the Bakkarwal might be represented by members of villages with whom their relationships have been eroded to a greater or a lesser degree. Even assuming that the *gram sabha* will itself be constituted entirely from within the community, the Act provides that any arbitration necessitated by an issue remaining unresolved by the *gram sabha* will pass to higher levels of administration at the district and state levels.

On the other hand, the community is also recognized as a Scheduled Tribe (ST), thus making it possible for it to access the Act under this category as well. And, while this may allow a greater degree of autonomy in possible arbitrations, for the community the ST category has no specific provision guaranteeing access to the routes the Bakkarwal have to take to reach even their final pastures, even though they are defined as the community’s resources under this Act.

In fact, it would seem that the security of the Bakkarwal economy is being rendered quite difficult because the function of mobility that is crucial to it is not protected. This also leads us to a recurrent contradiction in writing about nomads, which often argues for the preservation of nomadic forms of subsistence by increasing the freedom granted by the state to allow them to continue to practice their traditional ways of life. The legal measures that might be envisaged as allowing some form of stability to return to the lives of Kashmir’s nomads would require a far more elaborate consideration of how legislation on common resources is organized. Nonetheless, for the Bakkarwal, mobility is a necessary condition for the perpetuation of their form of existence.

The Maldhari Case

There are lessons to be learned from the experiences and successes of other pastoralists. The Maldhari (pastoralists) of the Banni grassland in the Kachchh region of Gujarat are the first pastoralist group in India to have successfully filed for Community Forest Rights (CFR) under the Forest Rights Act. The area they claimed for CFR is the 2500 square kilometres of the Banni grassland. Once one of Asia’s largest grasslands, Banni has been used and managed by the Maldhari for over five hundred years. During his rule, the Maharao of Kachchh permitted grazing and declared the pastureland to be a protected grassland. The Maldhari’s dependence on the pastures has been community based, with no individual ownership and no physical boundaries within the grassland area. The Maldhari live in about 54 villages in Banni and share its resources (Sahjeevan FRA report, unpublished).

The Banni grassland, a common property resource, is characterized by the Maldhari's traditional use and governance of it as a site of livestock-rearing, which maintains ecosystem wetland diversity in flora and fauna. The strategic efforts of the Banni Breeders' Association, facilitated and supported by Sahjeevan,⁵ a Kachchh-based organization, could lead to community rights being acknowledged over the area. Once recognized formally as a CFR area, the Banni grassland would be the largest such CFR area in India (ibid.). Currently, there are about seven thousand families, largely pastoralists, settled in Banni.

CFR claims from Banni have been approved by the sub-district Level Committee (SDLC). Forty-eight community claim files have been submitted and are currently with the District Level Committee level. In January 2016, representatives of the Banni Pashu Uchherak Maldhari Sangathan (BPUMS) or the Banni Breeders' Association and Sahjeevan met with the then Chief Minister of Gujarat to discuss moving the FRA process forward in Banni. This was an encouraging and positive meeting in which the Chief Minister recognized the issue and called for the recognition of CFR rights as well (ibid.).

However, even in Banni not all *panchayats* have agreed to be a part of the CFR claim, so there will remain a small number of people within Banni that will operate outside the community rights arrangements. This could potentially hinder the smooth management and use of the communal land (ibid.).

This indicates that similar claims-making may be highly unfeasible for the Gujjar and Bakkarwal of Jammu and Kashmir. There are three key factors that worked in favour of the Maldhari of the Banni that are simply absent in the case of the Gujjar and Bakkarwal. First and perhaps most significantly, the Banni grassland is a contiguous territory, a solid chunk of land much like a big village or a cluster of villages, all mostly inhabited by Maldhari pastoralists, whereas the Gujjar and Bakkarwal and their migratory routes and pastures are scattered and snake all across the geography of Jammu and Kashmir. Second, the *gram panchayats* in the Banni are either the Maldhari's own or the Maldhari, being the majority community, enjoy substantial representation in the village *panchayats* of the Banni. This is not the case for the Gujjars (the more sedentary of the two communities), who are often a minority in their villages, while most of the nomadic Bakkarwal do not live in villages at all but in tents in forest areas and pastures on land owned by the state. Third, the Maldhari are a well-

⁵ 'Since the last 25 years, Sahjeevan has been inspiring and supporting marginalised communities to revive their traditional ecological knowledge systems, engage with relevant technologies and scientific methods to conserve their ecological resources, and strengthen their livelihoods. Based in Kachchh, the organization has influenced local governance institutions, communities and the region as a whole to conserve biodiversity, regenerate traditional water systems based on local geo-hydrological solutions, revitalise pastoralism, promote indigenous livestock breeding practices, and strengthen resilience through rain-fed agriculture.' See <https://www.sahjeevan.org/index.html>

organized, well-consolidated group with robust institutions and links with other enabling organizations such as Sahjeevan. The Gujjar and Bakkarwal are so far not that well organized.

The youth leaders among the Gujjar and Bakkarwal want to map and secure their migratory corridors along with the summer and winter pastures and to claim land in forest villages through the Act. They have already made a list of over a dozen of the most important migratory routes in the region, from the Pir Panjals to the Himalayas. However, these have bottlenecks and stretches which have now become roads and settlements where the nomads compete for space and passage with vehicular traffic and harassment from the traffic police. Every year there are incidents where scores of the Bakkarwal's goats and sheep are killed by speeding trucks. They feel that making claims through the FRA would ensure both greater rights of passage through forests, roads, bridges and even the dreaded Jawahar tunnel, and the hope of compensation in the event of such accidents.

The Question of a Mobile Legal Subjectivity

All things considered, the larger point here is that a qualitative shift seems to be taking place where the survival of the nomadic Gujjar and Bakkarwal is increasingly contingent on turning their so far de facto rights into de jure rights. Does this imply that de jure claims in fragmented spaces will make rigid what has up to now been a much more pliable and organic process?

In *Shifting Landscapes*, Brara (2006) notes how, in her field in Rajasthan,

De facto grazing lands came to be recorded as 'culturable and unoccupied' state lands that were governed by a completely different set of rules from what were applicable to *de jure* pastures.... The allocation of 'culturable and unoccupied' government lands that were used as pastures were opened up for private agricultural purposes in 1957. This policy measure continues as one of the major planks of land reform. Since the type of land available for agricultural allotment...were increasing, the de facto grazing lands correspondingly kept shrinking.

Such lands, she adds, were gradually privatized, thus reducing the total area available for pasturage (ibid.: 36) and signalling a 'move towards a "politonality" whereby land should belong either to individuals or the state, as multiple, layered, simultaneous and partial uses of the land could not be captured in a bureaucratic record' (ibid.: 140).

She further cautions us that legislation that 'declares the state to be owner of all lands within a demarcated territory often remains an imagined state effect.' As enclosing such vast territories has always had its limits, here too their slow and steady breaching is giving rise to territorial claims to the commons by villagers, although in a context of uncertainty (ibid.: 252). The Gujjar and Bakkarwal have continued to access migratory routes and pastures, and to an extent this process has so far been supported by the state. This has not been a straightforward task, but it has been buttressed by their

sizeable numbers and some political wrangling whereby the state's bureaucracy has had to allow for their seasonal movements. Individual pastures are then accessed either through customary claims or by bribing and cajoling the forest guards and other petty state officials. Such manoeuvrings have also been written about in the context of Rajasthan and other areas in the work by P.S. Kavoori (1999), Sudha Vasani (2002) and others.

Traditional forms of pasturage also change along with those who use them. Does this imply that assertions of a social territoriality will increasingly have to be made from more stationary or sedentary outposts even for those who remain nomadic, or does the potential for acknowledging mobile legal subjectivities exist within the state? The establishment of mobile schools, discussed earlier, surely indicates that a *de jure* idea of mobility is equally present even within the sedentary bias of the state.

We understand with Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952] 1963: 181) and others that culture systems are products of action and the 'conditioning elements of further action', while Clifford and Marcus (1986) among others, have shown that culture is not so much a set of established beliefs, rituals and dogmas, but rather what emerges from shared questions and claims. The construction and preservation of a commons through a process of claims-making can be understood in this light.

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The German journal *Paideuma* has long had the practice, borrowed from the *Annual Review of Anthropology*, of publishing autobiographies of German, Austrian and Swiss German anthropologists as its lead article in each annual issue. The current volume brings together all of those that had appeared up to the time of its publication. There is also a useful introduction by the editor, who at the time was Managing Editor of *Paideuma*.¹ The collection therefore forms a valuable supplement to André Gingrich's previous history of German anthropology (Gingrich 2005) and to some of the chapters on East Germany in Hann et al. (eds. 2005), though both were written entirely in English. However, it is more than a supplement, since it asks nineteen anthropologists (one essay is double-authored) connected with the German-language anthropological scene how they got into anthropology and what resulted from that.

I have elsewhere² given my general impressions of the volume, from which a potted history of German-speaking post-war anthropology overall can be gleaned. This account focuses on specific individuals and what in their respective accounts seems to me most characteristic and interesting. For example, Ivo Strecker and Jean Lyall talk about the personal costs of fieldwork. They recount how they split up as a couple more than once because of the circumstances of their fieldwork among the Hamar, beginning with Jean feeling resentful at male-dominated coffee-drinking parties to which Ivo was invited but she was not. Equally frequently, however, they found their way back to one another, such were the bonds, and adventures, that united them from their student days onwards.

There is a sense of imbalance in some contributions. Thus, Hans Fischer chooses to focus on his teaching activities and the changing state of teaching throughout his career, saying very little about his own intellectual interests and how he came upon them. Some contributions concentrate on only part of a career: thus Meinhard Schuster tells us about his education as an anthropologist before he established himself in Basle in the late 1960s, but has little to say about his mature career in the context of anthropology in Switzerland. Christian Feest also

¹ The essays are by Ivo Strecker and Jean Lyall (a joint essay in English), Hans Fischer, Rüdiger Schott, Meinhard Schuster, Horst Nachtigall, Lothar Stein, Josef Franz Thiel, Hermann Jungraithmayr, Beatrix Heintze, Klaus E. Müller, Mark Münzel, Fritz W. Kramer, Gerhard Baer, Karl W. Wernhart, Christian Feest, Bernhard Streck, Volker Heeschen and Heike Behrend (all in German). In fact, the only such contribution not to be reproduced is that by Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin, which was only published in *Paideuma* in 2019, after the present collection had already come out. That contribution is especially memorable for the author's forthright denunciation of sexual harassment in the discipline, from which she herself seemed to have suffered frequently.

² *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, forthcoming.

concentrates on his training more than his later career. In other contributions too there is a sense of an opportunity missed. Thus Lothar Stein, who pursued his whole career in East Germany, including the long period of Germany's division, tells us very little about the specific circumstances, especially the difficulties, of establishing oneself and working in academia in a repressive state like the GDR, preferring to concentrate on his own activities and considerable achievements instead. However, Bernhard Streck has much to say about the fate of Leipzig anthropology after the fall of the German Democratic Republic, in which he was himself involved sufficiently to be condemned by some as a Wessie carpetbagger for taking over a professorship there after the expulsion of socialist-era postholders (cf. Treide 2005: 150 note 28, and especially van der Heyden 2005). He is also amusing, as well as honest, about the numerous disappointments he invoked in some of his teachers and colleagues in relation to their originally often tacit expectations of him.

A broader perspective on their careers than some of the papers just mentioned is provided by Herrmann Jungraithmayr, the Austrian linguistic anthropologist (his essay is the longest), and Josef Franz Thiel, who describes Austrian mission anthropology as part of the intellectual and institutional lineage of Wilhelm ('Pater') Schmidt, the most powerful figure in mid-century Austrian anthropology until his death in 1954. Thiel shows how that lineage was already falling apart in the 1950s, as some of the great man's acolytes drifted away from his theoretical dogmas. However, Thiel also tracks his own career in some detail, as well as describing his own upbringing in WWII and its aftermath in a German-speaking village in the Vojvodina (Serbia), when he and his family had to cope not only with the Nazi invasion but the communist takeover that succeeded it. Karl R. Wernhart too, who also spent a lot of his career in his native Austria, gives us a flavour of internal academic politics in the country in his time, some of which affected his own career adversely. Feest also contributes to this theme, having migrated to Austria from his native Bohemia in the period of the expulsions of Sudeten-Deutschen to follow his career both there and in Germany.

Klaus E. Müller is even more expansive concerning the ups and downs of his professional life, starting with the difficult decision to abandon a blossoming career in opera to take up anthropology (he also admits, unusually for this circle, to a relative lack of facility in English). Unlike many contributors to the volume, who saw in museum work an often temporary alternative to teaching and research in an anthropology department, Müller collaborated instead with a variety of natural scientists and psychologists in his later career, evidently in reaction to the barriers institutional anthropology had placed in his way. Mark Münzel goes further than this in his contribution, being quite scathing about the relationship between working in a

museum and working in an anthropology department,³ though Gerhard Baer, the only Swiss anthropologist in the collection by birth, discusses this relationship more dispassionately. Volker Heeschen, a linguistic anthropologist whose account of his career turns from autobiography to academic lecture at certain points in a way that most contributors manage to avoid, recalls the criticism he faced in some quarters over his engagement with ethology and ethologists, though his career does not seem to have faced the same adverse consequences that Müller writes about.

Not all contributors relied on fieldwork in their careers: thus Beatrix Heintze concentrated on archival work, especially on the history of Angola as a Portuguese colony, in part because the growing conflict in the country both before and after independence made fieldwork unfeasible. Feest too appears to have developed his career in the absence of significant fieldwork experience. Heike Behrendt, by contrast, writes about her own field experience in Kenya and Uganda in some detail, having decided at the outset to describe not only her informants and her impressions of them, but their impressions of her. I was particularly interested in her account of the anthropology department in the Free University of Berlin in the years before I arrived there myself in 1986.

Perhaps inevitably this is a partial selection, which need not be solely a matter of editorial judgement: death might have intervened, some of those who were approached might have refused, and others might not have been considered suitable for one reason or another. Three of the nineteen contributors are women,⁴ but as in other scholarly traditions gender equality was even harder to find in this period than it is today. Regionally too there are some gaps, with little evidence that Europe was ever seriously considered as an important ethnographic area in Germany at this time, no doubt reflecting a bias in research towards the third world, and also, perhaps, a desire by most of these contributors to distance themselves from old-fashioned folklore studies carried out primarily in Europe, a tension between *Volkskunde* (folklore) and *Völkerkunde* (ethnology or anthropology) that has shaped much German anthropology, and indeed much central and east European anthropology as well. Admittedly the Anglo-Saxon and French branches of the discipline only took up Europe as an ethnographic area relatively late as well.

What might a future exercise of this sort come up with? In 2005 I and some colleagues were still able to draw lines around the national traditions of anthropological scholarship we

³ The title of his contribution is also the main title of the volume as a whole.

⁴ A fourth is Hauser-Schäublin. See above, note 1.

respectively described – British, German, French (in my case) and American (Barth et al. 2005). While that still makes sense historically, it would be more problematic today, as what I have called the internationalization or perhaps Americanization of the discipline continues to take hold. Thanks not least to Europe-wide professional associations like EASA and its journal *Social Anthropology*, the establishment, at least de facto, of English as the accepted international academic language and the arrival of the Internet, anthropological publications and the facts and ideas they contain are rapidly disseminated across the continent and more widely, breaking down both political and intellectual boundaries. Whether this replacement of diversity by a sense of growing homogeneity is a good thing only time will tell.

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KONSTANTINOS KALANTZIS, *Tradition in the frame: photography, power, and imagination in Sfakia, Crete*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019. 321pp.

A very long time ago, when I was an undergraduate studying Classics at the University of Melbourne, my (then) young lecturer returned from his first trip to the eastern Mediterranean. He had very much enjoyed Turkey, but he didn't much care for Greece. I was surprised and asked why. 'Too many professional Zorbas!' he muttered.

A decade later, when I was living in Greece, his words occasionally returned to me, for not a few Greeks – taxi drivers, taverna proprietors, tourist guides – seemed intent on living out, or at least in describing themselves in terms of, a national stereotype. Let me quickly say that I do not think that such national self-presentations are a peculiarly Greek phenomenon. In London at the time there were plenty of young Australians offering up their national stereotype as scripted by Barry Humphries. And then, both at home and abroad, there are always the professional Irishmen, or the Texans. Nevertheless, Greeks were adept at, and given to, performing their Greekness.

Konstantinos Kalantzis's study is, of course, set in Greece; more particularly, however, it is set in Crete; and even more particularly, it is set in the mountainous region of Sfakia, in southwest Crete, whose inhabitants are 'the most distinctive of Greeks in the national imagination' (p. 250), a distinctiveness most Sfakians are at some pains to maintain. How they do this is what Kalantzis's book seeks to describe and explain, and these days that turns out to be no simple matter. As Kalantzis points out, in many respects his work follows on from Michael Herzfeld's study, thirty years ago, of another highland community in central Crete, which Herzfeld described in terms of a poetics, 'whereby people contextually performed and precariously managed idealizations of the self' (Kalantzis, p. 223). In Sfakia, as in Herzfeld's 'Glendi', that (male) idealization entails the huge and competitive consumption of alcohol, the boisterous discharging of guns at wedding feasts, the threat of violence and of feud, and, importantly, close attention to dress and appearance, all of which are bundled together by Sfakians and non-Sfakians alike (Greek and foreign tourists, folklorists, journalists et al.) as 'traditions'. What complicates matters nowadays are contested evaluations of these traditions, again by both Sfakians and non-Sfakians, in terms of that very elusive analytic concept, 'authenticity'.

Sfakian (male) dress is distinctive: knee-high leather boots, breeches (rather like jodhpurs), black shirt, and black headscarf. Needless to say, this is not standard day-to-day wear, but since the 1980s it has increasingly been worn by men on festive public occasions (weddings,

baptisms). In the summer months it is also donned by market traders in the provincial capital of Chania for the delectation of tourists. Like Kalantzis, I have also seen parties of men wearing it in Athens, presumably because, like my Australians in London, they were keen to assert their distinctiveness while in the nation's capital. But how 'traditional' is this dress? Actually most Sfakians who wear it realize that the combination is of comparatively modern origin. The boots appear to be traditional enough, but in the early twentieth century breeches replaced *vrakes*, loose knee-length pantaloons, and black shirts were originally a sign of mourning. Yet Sfakians who wear the attire say they 'feel good' in it; on the other hand, as Kalantzis points out, 'people harbor some anxiety about whether this attire appears genuine to spectators or seems like a staged re-creation' (p. 127).

This anxiety is at the nub of the particular dilemma that has been created for the Sfakians, and also, as Kalantzis insists, in part by the Sfakians, for they are required by their audiences, both national and international, to be 'traditional'; and yet in attempting to live up to the tenets of their ascribed traditions, they can be accused, and accuse each other, of inauthenticity. What facilitates the Sfakians' commitment to 'tradition' and their claims and counter-claims to embodying it provides the other major theme of Kalantzis's work: the existence of a large corpus of photographic images which are objects of contemplation, veneration and comparison.

Sfakians, usually men, usually bearded, always in local dress, began to be photographed from the turn of the twentieth century, postcards often circulating locally, nationally and internationally. In 1939, 'Nelly' (Elli Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari), a professional photographer, was commissioned by the Metaxas dictatorship to obtain images to promote Crete as a tourist destination. Again, her penchant was for males dressed in local attire. Her photographs were displayed in the 1940s and 1950s in magazines and as postcards, but in the early 2000s two coffee-table volumes containing her works were published, which were brought to the attention of Sfakians by urban friends and relatives. Another commercial photographer, George Meis, took a series of photographs in the 1970s featuring a Sfakian, Manolis Nikoloudis, in traditional dress, which were again reproduced as postcards and appeared in a coffee-table book published in 2000. By the late 2000s there were approximately twenty companies producing postcards of Crete and featuring the iconic bearded male in traditional dress (as do brands of Cretan olive oil and cheese). They were, and are, of course aimed at the tourist market, but they have also provided Sfakians with a corpus of images that genuinely documents their past but simultaneously presents it in an idealized form against which the present generation can compare itself – often somewhat invidiously. To this commercially produced corpus of images must be added those produced nowadays by tourists. As Kalantzis observes, 'There is hardly a

Sfakian household that does not have photographs of its members taken by tourists' (p. 268). Usually these photographs are taken during a casual encounter and then sent back in thanks for hospitality received.

All of this begins to look perilously like a form of Orientalism, whereby the Sfakians are the observed, and romanticized, subjects of an external gaze – and clearly this is true, but only up to a point. One of the strengths of Kalantzis's account is that he refuses to opt for the simple and politically appealing view that sees the Sfakians as powerless and exploited victims of external agents, for they are as much the 'consumers' of the traditions they embody as are the outsiders who record them. Hence, indeed, both the Sfakians' interest in their own 'traditional' dress and their ability to dispute its authenticity among themselves: the black shirt is worn with pride as a sign of Cretan descent, yet it also raises a concern that it is a 'perversion of custom, a violation of past (mourning) ethos' (p. 7). And while Sfakians pour over photographs of an earlier period and attempt to identify family ancestors (and frame postcards of them), they can also disparage a subject as an *eghoistis* who posed for photographs in a quest for self-promotion. And what applies to dress applies to other material and less material aspects of being a Sfakian: the use of guns, heavy wine-drinking, the use of ram and goat skulls to ornament fences, the growing of beards, and the use of four-wheel-drive trucks are all indulged in; and yet, as Kalantzis puts it, 'Every action today is subject to criticism as modern excess that taints the past. Simultaneously, the past and tradition are objects of immense, renewed interest and trigger a desire for embodiment' (p. 223).

Kalantzis has produced remarkably detailed and perceptive ethnography (if that is a word that can still be used) of a very particular society in southwestern Crete, aspects of which, however, would be immediately recognizable to anyone who has spent time anywhere in Greece and would also, I think, be found in very many contemporary societies around the world: hence my graceless intrusion of expatriate London Australians, or Irish or Texans in this review. But good ethnographies always move us from a consideration of the particular to its resonances in society in general.

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DARRYL LI, *The universal enemy: jihad, empire, and the challenge of solidarity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2020. xv, 364 pp. £24.99 (paperback). ISBN 978-1-5036-1087-3.

Born in Iraq, Fadhil came to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1979 as a student of metallurgy, and to avoid the war then starting with Iran. Yet within a decade he was soon pulled into another war that erupted in his adoptive country in 1992. With a Bosnian family by then and as a practising Muslim, he decided to fight in what later became a special Muslim military unit, 'Ored Elmudžahedin' or 'Katiba' ('battalion' in Arabic), alongside the Bosnian Army. After the war, he acquired Bosnian citizenship and settled in Zenica to resume his pre-war life. Yet peace was not in the cards for him: after 9/11 and the full upsurge of the Global War on Terror, his Bosnian citizenship was revoked. After a legal battle that ended up in the European Court of Human Rights, he lost his case and found himself about to be deported to his home city of Kirkuk in Iraq in 2012. Scared for his safety, he fled to western Europe instead, forced to leave his Bosnian wife and children behind.

Fadhil as the so-called 'jihadi fighter' or *mujahid* is an example of what Darryl Li calls the 'universal enemy' (p. 3) in his intriguing new book, *The universal enemy: jihad, empire and the challenges of solidarity*. In Li's account, demonized, marginalized and affected by the racialization of Islam, Fadhil and his comrade *mujahids* were caught up in the new paranoias about terrorism and radicalization. Their untold life stories and vicissitudes before and after the 1992-5 Bosnian war are narrated in this anthropological investigation into the transnational *mujahid* phenomenon set at the time of the Bosnian war. But Li takes us outside Bosnia, from Saudi Arabia through Pakistan to Britain, as he traces 28 fighters (seventeen foreign and eleven Bosnian) to illustrate the global and universal phenomenon of joining wars in the name of Islam that inspired several thousand Muslims to join what he calls the 'Bosnian *jihad*'.

His narrative debunks a series of what he considers to be misconceptions about *mujahids* and *jihad*. Li aims to humanize the otherwise demonized figures of Islamic fighters by showing how for some religion can be a justifiable reason to fight, an idea fully rejected in the west. Yet, as the first part of the book shows, there were many other reasons to join in *jihad*, the universal Islamic belief in solidarity being only one among many, alongside the outrage at the lack of an international response to the savagery of the Bosnian war or the zealous pursuit of redemption and martyrdom. Interestingly, Li does not situate his account within current debates regarding ISIS. However, the multifarious journeys to and adaptations in Bosnia of those who came mainly from the Arab world but also from the west complicate the simplified picture he wants to tackle of violent, inhuman and radicalized individuals joining in the violence.

While motivations differed, Li presents several universalisms (mainly citing Carl Schmitt) as the binding idea that underpinned the *mujahids*' struggle. The frequent references to universalism

at times seem forced, especially as alternative interpretations of the fighters' motivations, such as the imposition of a value system, are overlooked. But Li sees the *ummah* in particular as a form of transnational Muslim solidarity that transcended nationalities on the battlefield. Yet during the war, this solidarity was not understood by everyone. While the incoming fighters were not 'national enough' for the local nationalists, Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) were not 'Muslim enough' for the foreign *mujahids*, who disagreed with the local relaxed practice of Islam (p. 61). After the war, the 'orientalization' of 'Arabs' and their framing as extremist dark-skinned savages and suicide fighters who committed war crimes turned them into domestic 'universal enemies' – or, in Li's account, into scapegoats of global and domestic politics and victims of racial and religious bias. 'Arabs were constitutive outsiders: acting against them was one of the very few things Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, and Westerners could agree on,' he writes (p. 200).

While the book provides a provocative contribution to our understanding of the global foreign-fighter phenomena, it is less successful in improving our understanding of the local developments in Bosnia. Although Li sets out to provide the perspective of the foreign and local fighters, much remains unsaid about the views of 'the local', whether in the Bosnian army or the civilian population. All we learn is that Bosnians viewed *mujahids* with a combination of admiration and fear, with Bosnian soldiers using them as 'shock troops' (p. 92) or 'cannon fodder' (p. 91). In particular, discussion of the role of women is completely lacking. There is a rather naive depiction of their views of the *mujahids* as 'handsome', without any reflection on the Salafi position on women's role, which is foreign to Bosnian European customs. Similarly, the fact that *mujahids* committed war crimes (alongside others) is mentioned only in passing. We also learn little about, for example, local imams' attitudes towards Salafism or the Bosnian public's reactions to *mujahids* during the war. The European (and European Union) orientation of Bosnia is entirely overlooked, the country being framed instead within global jihadi conflicts. One reason for many of the local omissions may be Li's positioning in the field – which is, unfortunately, not discussed explicitly – and his inability to communicate with local people in Bosnian. Instead, he used Arabic and English, giving him a very narrow access to informants in Bosnia.

More importantly, Li skips over the influence of the rise of ISIS and is silent about the current growth of Salafi preachers across Bosnia, many of whom are linked to the Bosnian conflict. The reader wonders about these connections and how they have been transformed since 1995. Li interestingly describes how some Bosnians left for the Middle East after the war out of a curiosity to learn about different varieties of Islam. Although their motivations must have been much more diverse, given their current influence across Bosnian Muslim communities, this side of the story is left out. Li is also conspicuously silent about the Saudi Wahhabi phenomenon that had already attracted a great deal of attention in Bosnia in the early 2000s. In fact, *The universal enemy* might

have provided a starting point for these developments, but there is no mention of them. To understand the Bosnian context, Li's book thus needs to be read alongside other works, such as Marko Attila Hoare's books about the conflict (e.g. *How Bosnia Armed*), the role of religion (e.g. by Mark Sells, David Henig, Torsten Kolind, Tone Bringa and others) or the local research of Vlado Azinović and Edina Bećirović on Salafism. Only then can a much more rounded picture of the conflict, 'radicalization' and Bosnian Islam emerge.

Although one might have reservations about Li's approach and his at times one-sided portrayal of the *mujahids*, his data are rich, having been collected from archives, court files and media, as well as through interviews and fieldwork observations. His research spanned twelve years, which is not surprising, given the controversial nature of the fighters he set out to interview, which often took him to prisons around the world. His training as a human rights lawyer affiliated with advocacy organizations provided access to interviews, while his ethnographic methods give the book a richness through personal stories of his fieldwork. The structure is effective, as the first part focuses on the *mujahids* and the war itself, while the second provides a wider contextual anchoring for describing what came before and after the war. To Li, Bosnia is a mere backdrop to a wider story of universalism that reveals itself especially in the second part of the book, which situates the war at the end of the internationalist socialism of the Non-Aligned Movement, the era of international peacekeeping, and the 'Global War on Terror'.

The main contribution of the book is that its provocative and widely accessible account complements discussions about foreign fighters and extremism that have often been presented in vilifying terms in western scholarship. The clear structure and Li's writing style also make *The Universal Enemy* readable outside academia, among much wider policy and public audiences. Yet readers seeking an account of the contemporary 'radicalization' phenomenon or explanations of Bosnian Islam and the 1992-5 war should look elsewhere. Instead, the book represents a novel portrayal of universal jihadism and the attractions of a localized war with far-reaching and long-lasting global reverberations that is certainly worth the read.

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