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As humans, we struggle to accept the ideas and values which we do not agree with or understand. In ethnography, this principle becomes especially convoluted due to the current attempts to decolonize the field and move toward social justice and equity. Although these changes prove vitally important, specific ethnographic practices seen as out of alignment with these current movements face significant overhaul. One practice in particular has come under particular scrutiny: relationship ethnography within the study of immoral groups. Benjamin Teitelbaum states in a video outlining his work: “Ethnographers following the so-called ‘world turn’ in ethnography have increasingly insisted that our work have greater moral clarity and consistency. That not just we as people, but also we also scholars should be distinctly operating and producing knowledge in the service of social justice.” This project attempts to dissect the ‘acceptable practice’ for ethnographers to study groups which hold unpopular, unethical, or narrowly held values. Taking a specific look at ethnographers of Nationalist (often called white supremacist) groups, as well as literature on guidelines to ethnographic practice, the project seeks to illuminate the necessity of building meaningful and genuine relationships, even with those who appear difficult to understand or ‘repulsive’. Additionally, this research bridges the world of scholarship and ethnography with similar notions inoculating popular culture. With the connective understanding of a human need to listen and respect, even without agreement and understanding, the ability to meet the imperative of change can then be addressed. Without this understanding and respect, no true hope for positive change can exist.

Gunzenhauser, Michael G. “A Moral Epistemology of Knowing Subjects: Theorizing a Relational Turn for Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 3 (June 2006): 621–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405282800>.

As the University of Pittsburgh scholar Gunzenhauser states in his abstract, this article outlines the value of knowing subjects deeply and the subsequent improvement of epistemological knowledge which accompanies these relations/relationships. In direct correlation to Benjamin Teitelbaum’s arguments, Gunzenhauser argues that both commitment to care and representation of knowing fostered through relationships imply improvement to the quality of research obtained from subjects studied. Entering into the discussion of moral epistemology, Gunzenhauser seeks to add to the argument surrounding the gain and usage of epistemological knowledge with his educational background in qualitative research. More particularly, he seeks to illuminate how scholars view and treat their interlocutors and the subsequent effects this has on research quality. As he states in his conclusion, “the positioning of researcher and researched as knowing subjects, rather than as the knower and the known, accords dignity to research participants. As suggested by the exemplars, the voices and interpretations of research participants themselves actively contribute to new understanding.” Gunzenhauser also questions the concept of self and other in the conduct of research. This adds an interesting element to the lines drawn between researcher and interlocutors. Although unexplored in this article, this concept relates directly to the difficulties which both Teitelbaum and Pasiaka illuminate in their own work regarding the balance of upholding personal values while simultaneously respecting the relationships and trust built with interlocutors.

Harding, Susan. "Representing Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other." *Social Research* 58, no. 2 (1991): 373-93.

Susan Harding, a professor of social sciences and anthropology at the University of California at Santa Cruz, digs into the pervasive theme of othering that plagues current scholarship of immoral groups. She asserts that stereotypes and generalities serve to blanket the values of fundamentalists and allow scholars to ignore the roots which create those systems of value and understanding. In these instances of ignorance, scholars eschew important knowledge which I argue holds the only real key to pertinent and positive change. She also attacks the difficulties that scholars of immoral groups face when she says: "insofar as academic representations of fundamentalists are modern, then disrupting them may provoke charges of consorting with 'them,' the opponents of modernity, progress, enlightenment, truth and reason." Many scholars of Nationalist and other immoral groups discuss the backlash and assumptions they face in studying and thus "bringing voice" to these groups. Often, scholars of such groups face similar sweeping assumptions and stereotypes which categorize them as sympathizers of the values their interlocutors hold. Those who build relationships which have significant epistemological value, such as Benjamin Teitelbaum, face even more defamatory accusations.

Lavin, Talia. *Culture Warlords: My Journey into the Dark Web of White Supremacy*. New York: Hachette Books, 2020.

Talia Lavin's work does not employ the *genuine* friendship model of ethnography. While she befriends the white supremacists she studies, she does so in a variety of undercover roles, acting either as one of them or as an object of their desire (i.e. a so-called "Nazi babe" and "Aryan femme fatale"). These positions directly refute the type of relationship-ethnography which many scholars fight for in their work. While some scholars seek to create a meaningful justification for this type of ethnographic work among immoral groups, journalists like Talia Lavin exemplify the detrimental work of undercover sleuthing. The biggest detriments reside in the 'othering' of those studied and potential for confirmation bias what/how questions are asked. In her undercover work online, Talia Lavin seems to fall into both of these traps, not least because of her strong-willed personality, Jewish heritage, and personal history of loss at the hands of anti-Semites. However, her work also shines light on the imperative difficulty which plagues the debate behind employing this type of ethnographic model among such groups. Some of the vitriol and criminal discussions or threats which Talia encounters in the undercover worlds of white supremacists and incels exposes the difficulty which all researchers face in this type of work. A battle of ethicality and upholding personal values, even when studying groups who drastically differ from these, can prove emotionally taxing and incredibly compromising at times.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "Anthropology." Accessed online October 21, 2020.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anthropology>.

The concise Merriam Webster definition classifies anthropology as "the science of human beings: *especially* the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture." The importance of this definition resides in its simplest and broadest aspect: the specific term 'human beings'. This definition does not imply that anthropology should only include the study of human beings widely agreed with, ethical, or just in their values and actions. While these notions have infiltrated scholarship, the importance of understanding groups with divergent values actually increases in importance. Ignoring them does not minimize their influence or allow for a better

understanding of those values, instead the diminution of acknowledgment serves to sever chances at reconciliation and inspiration toward change in those groups.

Murphy, Elizabeth and Robert Dingwall. "The Ethics of Ethnography". In *Handbook of Ethnography*, 339-351. Edited by Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland, and Lyn Lofland. SAGE Publications, 2001. <https://dx-doi-org.du.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781848608337.n23>.

Elizabeth Murphy and Robert Dingwall prove an interesting duo with a wealth of ethnographic experience. From highly varied but both highly anthropological backgrounds, the two bring together history in archaeology (Murphy) and current human study in sociology (Dingwall). The understanding of people over time helps provide contextualization and perspective to their handbook of ethnographic work. Early in this excerpt from the *Handbook of Ethnography*, Elizabeth Murphy and Robert Dingwall make an imperative comment about ethnographers' contention between maintaining values and gaining knowledge when they say: "For ethnographers, ethical issues are also inextricably related to views about the ontological and epistemological foundations of their work." Benjamin Teitelbaum claims that epistemological gain correlates with the quality of relationships built. As the quality of relationships and collaboration between the scholar and interlocutors improves, the epistemological gain typically improves as well. This correlation relates directly to the insider knowledge gained only through trust and mutual respect. Dingwall in particular discusses the dissonance between study of groups which diverge with an ethnographer's moral judgements. Here he states that many scholars advocate for a distanced approach, but he cites the 'principle of justice' to instead suggest equal treatment of all research participants. He further necessitates an equally sophisticated understanding of their behavior, whether admirable or disturbing. This approach highlights the importance of equity in approach but distinguishes equity toward research participants as separate from compromising personal values while studying immoral groups. In essence, an ethnographer should aim to employ an equitable approach regardless of the status of morality among interlocutors because many value systems are highly nuanced and difficult to understand from a distanced and distasteful approach.

Pasieka, Agnieszka. "Anthropology of the Far Right: What If We Like the 'Unlikeable' Others?" *Anthropology Today* 35, no. 1 (2019): 3-6.

Pasieka's article inserts itself into a similar narrative as that of Benjamin R. Teitelbaum. Studying the far-right in Poland, Pasieka explores the 'othering' of this group and the cognitive dissonance which occurs in the space between understanding and connecting with those who are seen as immoral. She makes a case for the importance of humanizing these individuals although she asserts that scholars need not like them and develop rapport when she says "there is no necessary link between 'liking' and attempting to understand, or even between liking and developing a rapport with the people studied." Here, her narrative disagrees significantly with Teitelbaum, who adamantly asserts that this rapport in fact fosters the epistemology which justifies the immoral relationships.

Shoshan, Nitzan. *The Management of Hate: Nation, Affect, and the Governance of Right-Wing Extremism in Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Shoshan centers his argument in a more neutral zone of assessment and with a more insightful insider critique. Because he chooses to spend a year and a half among the young

nationalist extremists in East Berlin, he gains both an insider account and finds ways to dive into the policies which govern ideals in Germany. Seeking to merge the understanding of state policies and the mediation of hate, he looks in depth at the exigence behind the actions of the young extremists living in Berlin. This depth of fieldwork, policy examination, and the mediation of assessing hate, position him as an intermediary in the argument I seek to insert myself into. Although Nazi ideals provide a natural reaction of disgust, the need to actually understand what causes the values they hold becomes even more pertinent. By living among them and interacting consistently and meaningfully with the individuals, Shoshan demonstrates the insider epistemology which cannot be replaced by a distanced and sanctimonious outsider. As a professor of sociological studies, Shoshan provides even more imperative knowledge into the “why” behind the value systems he encounters. Not only does he gain insider epistemological knowledge, but he holds the epistemological power to interpret his findings into a more contextualized and nuanced understanding of the forces which underlay right-wing extremism.

Strauss, Neil (@neilstrauss), “Shaming someone into action creates acting. Inspiring someone into action creates change,” Twitter, June 3, 2020, 11:43 p.m., <https://twitter.com/neilstrauss/status/1268417967017975809?lang=en>.

As a journalist and author, Neil Strauss maintains a vested interest in the way people act and interact. A quote from his website states that “Neil leaves no stone unturned in pursuit of the truth. Straight-forward and brutally honest writing allows him to transfer his experiences and the experiences of others into readers’ minds.” Neil Strauss’s quote reveals a concept that proves often unacknowledged and difficult to live out, but essential to the human condition. Thinking through an argument that any of us has had in the past; are we quick to listen and slow to answer? Do we make others feel heard and understood or do we formulate our own questions rather than attempting to digest and accept their ideas? These questions catalyze an imperative connection between employing a friendship model of ethnography with immoral groups and simply learning to listen to anyone we disagree with in life. As humans, there exists an implicit understanding that unique values and ideas pervade the minds of each individual. With this set of unique qualities, we also struggle to consider and accept perspectives which act contrary or even devalue our own. With regard to ethnographic study, as the turn toward social justice occurs, the imperative for morality in research devalues listening to those who do not align with the overarching value system of equity in place. The hope not to bring voice to oppressors seems laudable on the surface, but past the aesthetic value of discontinuing the voice of oppressors comes an inability to understand where their values come from, why they continue to exist, and enough mutual respect to even hope for change. As Neil Strauss illuminates so beautifully and concisely, true change comes from inspiration, not shaming. We cannot hope to silence oppressors into nullification but instead must inspire them to a different understanding.

Teitelbaum, Benjamin R. "Collaborating with the Radical Right: Scholar-Informant Solidarity and the Case for an Immoral Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 60, no. 3 (2019): 414-35.

As a scholar of the radical right educating and conducting research from his position at the University of Colorado, Benjamin Teitelbaum uses this article to defend the understandably unethical approach to studying radical Nationalists, or White Supremacists. Although he does not condone their actions and agendas, he makes a case for what he dubs “immoral anthropology,” defending the need to create genuine, meaningful relationships between scholar and informants

despite the inherent repercussions this may lead to. Although he does not condone eschewing personal values and moral obligations, he blurs the lines between standing in solidarity, and taking part in actions that foster these relationships, despite sometimes taking part in the immoral processes which these individuals build their lives around. Perhaps most importantly, Teitelbaum humanizes a group that continues to be ‘othered’ in the world of ethnography and anthropology and enlightens the need to understand them as people with values, even if they differ from ours. While we may not condone these values or support them, how can we possibly begin to expect change without considering the values held from *their perspective*. Without this understanding outside the undeniable realm of bias, no true understanding can occur. This argument plays into the larger issue embedded within anthropology and ethnography—when is it unconscionable to give voice to those with morals we disagree with, or is it unconscionable *not* to try and understand why they act as they do, in their own terms?

Teitelbaum, Benjamin, Jeff Titon, Muriel Reigersberg, Razia Sultanova, Rebecca Dirksen, and Simon McKerrell. “Complicating the Conversation about Ethics.” (Roundtable discussion at the 77th annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, online conference, October 25, 2020). <https://player.vimeo.com/video/462476879>, <https://player.vimeo.com/video/462476692>, <https://player.vimeo.com/video/462477582>, <https://player.vimeo.com/video/462457243>. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ethnomusicology.org/resource/resmgr/2020_annual_meeting/abstracts_book_sem_2020_10.1.pdf (107).

During the 65th annual meeting of SEM, a virtual roundtable took place on Zoom due to the COVID19 pandemic. To begin the session, scholars presenting introduced their research and its ethical repercussions with prerecorded videos or live introductions. Each scholar presented differing types of research in a variety of countries and cultural groups. Benjamin Teitelbaum, the exigence for this research project, introduces moral implications and repercussions of his work regarding radical Nationalists. In the first video listed above, he states that “ethnography, as it has been theorized and valued throughout recent decades, centers around the formation of relationships between scholars and the people they study. Over time theorists have further argued that the methodology is both more ethically executed and epistemologically productive as those relationships become closer, specifically as they grow more collaborative and egalitarian.” With this concern in mind, Benjamin Teitelbaum used the roundtable to detail some of the difficulties faced as an ethnographer (and ethnomusicologist) of a distinctly immoral group. He specifically positions himself at odds with their value system, but also introduces the imperative for genuine relationships to produce quality epistemological knowledge. With this concept in mind, I seek to take that idea further and outline the connection from this idea to the real-world application of inspiring change in equity and justice. Without trust and mutual respect, hope for changing anyone’s mind proves undeniably futile.

Teitelbaum, Benjamin R. *Lions of the North*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

In his opening statement, Benjamin Teitelbaum unveils the undeniable pitfall of the divide in ethnographic research methods among immoral groups. As he declares “Outsiders call them ‘right-wing extremists,’ ‘organized racists,’ or ‘neofascists,’ but *they call themselves* ‘nationalists’” (2017, 1, my emphasis). Although this statement appears simple and perhaps unremarkable, the clearly positioned difference between insider and outsider understanding outlines the necessity of this argument. With epistemology comes patience and trust.

Ethnographers do not simply obtain genuine knowledge and deep understanding of the values underlying social groups and cultures at a glance. These revelations occur with time, relationships, and meaningful interactions as Teitelbaum both asserts and defends throughout his book. Through a variety of relationships with different interlocutors positioned as nationalists—from ‘skinheads’ to singers to policy makers—he seeks the deeper connections which reward him with genuine insight into the way nationalists live and think. Instead of positioning himself on moral high ground, Teitelbaum begins by explaining the moral difficulties he faces in his own intentions and experience. He does not dismiss them as unimportant but justifies them through the nuance of the relationships he holds with interlocutors. As he elucidates throughout, those who perpetuate hegemonic notions do not prove unfailingly evil and unthinking or idiotic. Instead, they have complicated values, historied pasts, and a wealth of experience to help us understand themselves and ourselves better, with patience.

Turino, Thomas. “Music and Political Movements.” In *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, 205-210. Edited by Philip V. Bohlman, Bruno Nettl, and Ronald Radano. Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Turino’s chapter on the semiotics of politics and music does not directly relate to the current ethnography of nationalist groups but does inform the ways that ideology in these groups is perpetuated. As Turino, a scholar at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and ethnographer of many years states: “The ultimate goal of a political movement or a state is to have the population actually internalize the leadership’s vision, goals, and actions—its right to lead—as being part of the natural state of things, beyond question and questioning so they become ‘common sense’” (2008, 194). This discussion, while unrelated to the nationalist ethnography currently happening, illuminates underlying fundamental information on the thought process of disseminating value. This kind of information relates to the fundamental knowledge insiders today can gain into the values which exist in a group and how they are disseminated. Interestingly, Turino’s work considers the icons and indices surrounding Nazi use of music but generalizes the Nazi intention behind the strategic overhaul of music and social life and discourse without detailed examination into the creation of these values.