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Brazilian boys riding Indonesian waves: orientalism and patriarchy in a recent Brazilian surf movie

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I discuss the 2016 Brazilian surf movie *Um Filme de Surfe* by Bruno Zanin and Leandro Dora, featuring surfers Yago Dora, Yuri Gonçalves and Lucas Silveira. This small group of Brazilian surfers and their camera crew travel on a chartered boat to an island in the Indian Ocean to catch an incoming swell, where they pretend to find an unknown surf paradise. While doing so, they orientalise the local Indonesian culture as an exotic, pre-modern 'other' who they, the 'translocal' modern surfers, encounter and teach about modernity. I will also examine how they perform a 'bro' masculinity that forms a 'patriarchy' based on hijinks and pranks. In *Um Filme de Surfe*, the Brazilian surfers neglect to establish a dialogue with the local Indonesian islanders. They do not represent themselves as postcolonial subjects visiting a fellow culture from the global South; they are the cosmopolitan translocal surfers and the locals are mistaken for Polynesian islanders. I will then discuss how this film broadly reflects the challenge of representing non-white, non-Western surfers in the genre of surf films.

KEYWORDS

Orientalism; translocal; Brazil; Indonesia; surfing

At the 2016 Hang Loose Pro Surf Competition in Florianópolis, Brazil, hundreds of fit, young, wealthy Brazilians watched the victory of Californian Kanoa Igarashi over local favourite Jadson André. The surf magazine *Revista Hardcore* filmed the event as well as the post-awards party, and uploaded interviews with partygoers on its website. A common cause of celebration was the increase in status and importance of Brazilian surfing on the world stage due to the recent World Surf League victories of Gabriel Medina (2014) and Adriano de Souza (2015).

The main event that evening was the premiere of the 2016 Brazilian surf movie *Um Filme de Surfe* by Bruno Zanin and Leandro Dora, featuring young professional surfers Yago Dora, Yuri Gonçalves and Lucas Silveira.¹ The audience watched the surfers on a trip to an exotic tropical island in Indonesia in search of epic waves. The surfers re-enact the fantasy of discovering an unknown surf break, demonstrate the karmic pseudo-spirituality of giving the gift of surf knowledge to local children, and show a desire to be modern through the cutting-edge progression of their surf technique.² The audience did not see the complications of travel to Indonesia, they did not hear Indonesians speaking on camera and they did not see any cultural marker that identified the

island as Indonesian. In addition, the film effaced cultural markers that could have established the surfers' 'Brazilianness'. Propelled by the filmmakers, the surfers engaged in racist, Orientalist hijinks, that reinforce the fraternal aspect of their constructed identities.

Um Filme de Surfe positions the filmmakers and cast as modern, 'translocal' surfers, in contrast with 'out-of-time' islanders, in keeping with the romantic fantasy of surf-break discovery first demonstrated in *The Endless Summer* (1966).³ The film follows the traditions of the genre of Western surf movies set in Indonesia, which reinforce the power imbalance between visiting Western surfers and local non-Western islanders.

Here, I will first discuss how the film orientalises Indonesian culture as an exotic other that 'translocal' modern surfers experience. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field, I will show how the Brazilian team made a film that fits into pre-existing surf-film stereotypes about modern, cosmopolitan surfers visiting pre-modern locals who do not recognise the value of their surf breaks. In this construction, the Brazilians' cultural identity is replaced with a 'translocal' surfer identity: a composite of contemporary Californian, Hawaiian and Australian surfer identities. I note that the Indonesian islanders' identities are replaced with a generic Polynesian pre-modern islander identity, evoking Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, which describes how Westerners create identities for the non-Western objects of their gaze. To put *Um Filme de Surfe* in context, I will look at how some other surfing films also set in Indonesia represent Western surfers, as opposed to how they represent locals, while appropriating Indonesian surf breaks. Finally, I argue that *Um Filme de Surfe* performs a 'bro' masculinity based on hijinks and pranks that John Remy calls a 'fraternalism'.⁴ It is through this depiction of fraternal masculine identity via their hijinks that the film reveals its orientalist dynamic.

The surfers and filmmakers involved in *Um Filme de Surfe* are sponsored by multinational surf-apparel conglomerates RVCA and Volcom, and the film is available on the internet through the popular Surfline website's 'Editor's Pick' series as well as through their sponsors' sites.⁵ Yago Dora, the son of filmmaker Leandro Dora, is also sponsored by Carver skateboards and is featured in an international advertising campaign. A picture of him flying high over a wave from this trip made the July 2016 cover of the Portuguese -language surfing magazine *Revista Hardcore*. Yago Dora's increasing exposure in surf media is the result of his competitive surfing success. He won first place in the 2017 World Surf League's Maitland and Port Stephens Toyota Pro competition in Australia and gained a third-place finish behind former world champion Adriano de Souza at the Oi Rio Pro in Rio de Janeiro that same year. As one of the youngest professional surfers on the World Championship Tour of the World Surf League – having reached a final heat in his first year of competition – Yago Dora is poised to become an extremely successful figure in the surfing world.

In the film, Yago Dora, Gonçalves and Silveira perform what Jon Anderson calls 'translocal' surfer roles. Though the surfers have never been to the island represented in *Um Filme de Surfe* before, by virtue of their surfer identity they are depicted as having a legitimacy that actual locals, who do not surf, lack. Any wave is a translocal surfer's space because non-surfers do not understand the value of the break. In the film, this dynamic casts the residents of a small Indonesian island as the exotic 'other'. The filmmakers' purpose is to cultivate the translocal appearance of fun-loving, masculine soul-surfers,

who not only find a surfing paradise but also bring the gift of surfing knowledge to curious island children. According to Anderson:

When surfers go mobile their identity becomes all about the waves. The surf communities they have created shore-side at their home break are abstracted and taken to new, sometimes exotic locations. The camaraderie, humour, film-watching and magazine reading are transposed on top of a new location, with an identity oriented wholly around the surfing experience.⁶

In other words, when surfers travel to surf, they perform the identity of abstract, surf-centric global travellers rather than any national or regional aspects of their selves. Constructed in this way, they are not, first and foremost, visitors from a certain national group but rather are surfers in search of a perfect wave.

The stereotypes held by the Brazilian surfers and film crew of *Um Filme de Surfe* are revealed in the decisions they make in their film. Pierre Bourdieu calls the set of predispositions held by a group of people their habitus: a structure of all of a group's beliefs, preferences, acquired cultural knowledge and values.⁷ The filmmakers show their predispositions as they improvise on the themes of previous successful surf movies. One of those themes is that of the wandering surfer who discovers an unknown, perfect wave – a reinvention of the nineteenth-century romantic vision of the enlightened Western explorer discovering the sublime in savage nature.

Interactions between these romantic Western explorers and local non-Western non-surfers are completely beside the point. Surf films can, of course, highlight local surf community members, and their onshore interactions can demonstrate intercultural dialogue. However, just as often, such films set in non-Western locales focus on the danger locals present to the surfers or the environment. The purity of the waters, beach and local environs are a pillar of the translocal surfer habitus. But communication and understanding between translocal surfers and the locals at surf destinations are not necessary themes in a surf film – the point is to show the style of the surfers, the perfection of the waves and the progression of the sport.⁸ Anderson states:

Many mobile surfers are ... oblivious to the cultural traces existing in the land and littoral to which they travel to, preferring to bring their own form of surf culture with them ... The creation of a mobile surfer identity that is wholly concerned with the act of surfing rather than the supporting geographical and cultural assemblage can be understood as 'trans-local' in nature ... In these trans-local spaces, the communities and cultures that are associated with breaks are silenced or ignored.⁹

He also notes that the values of surf media supplant those of the local communities where the surf breaks. Anderson's analysis suggests that Dora, Gonçalves, Silveira and the film crew are more actively engaged with the culture of their sponsors – RVCA and Volcom – than they are with the Indonesians of the unnamed island they visit.¹⁰ Indeed, the film does not feature any audio of dialogue between the surfers and the locals.

In *Um Filme de Surfe*, the Brazilian surfers, who are from a country in the global South, create a one-directional discourse with local Indonesian islanders. They arrive with the habitus of surfing, and local islanders have nothing of value to offer them, though empathy with local culture may be performed in surf films as part of the global surf ethos of living in sync with nature or the karmic pseudo-spirituality of eschewing consumerism for 'the simple life'. One aspect of many surf films, such as in *Península Mitre*

(2017)¹¹ by the Gauchos del Mar, is that locals in economically underdeveloped areas are portrayed as unknowingly having a ‘simple life’ and therefore holding secret wisdom that a soul-surfer can attain.¹² But the secret itself is not related to their national cultural identity, in which context they might be considered poor and underserved by the state. Rather they are viewed as gurus embodying the surf-field values of living simply and sustainably in the wild beauty of the coast.

The title of the film is also suggestive of the idea of the translocal surfer. The phrase *Um Filme de Surfe* lacks any specificity of time and place. The protagonists in ‘A Surf Movie’ could be anyone from anywhere, as long as they are elite surfers of perfect waves. The only marker of Brazilian identity is that the film’s Portuguese title is left untranslated on the online platforms where it is available for viewing. As malleable constructions, internet surf media can be repacked to suit different viewers and venues. The production could have been edited with Portuguese viewers in mind for the Brazilian surf magazine *Hard-core* and then re-edited in English for *Surfer* magazine, whose offices are in the United States. The fact that this film is in Portuguese and that the title is not translated in its most visible venue, Surflines.com, is notable because English is the common language of most international surf competition, marketing and media. The title speaks to the aspiration of these filmmakers to create a product whose humour and hijinks are intended to entertain the Portuguese-speaking surf community but with a calibre of surfing that will also entertain a global audience. The film’s soundtrack is remixed soul, reggae and pop beats with lyrics in Portuguese and English. Through these structural elements, the movie asserts the right to speak in Portuguese from a position in the centre of translocal surf culture.

Though Dora, Gonçalves and Silveira are all from Brazil, there are few other markers of Brazilian identity in the film; dialogue is kept to a minimum with the exception of the Brazilian narrator. Their RVCA and Volcom board shorts and tank tops are for sale in Ubatuba (Brazil), Bondi Beach (Australia) and Malibu (United States). In their down time, they huddle around Apple laptops reviewing footage of their previous session. There is little sense of intercultural dialogue between them and the locals – nothing beyond the transactional relationship of a charter company and its clients. As translocal surfers, they could be from any of the Western surf capitals. The only self-identifying markers to be found are that they wish to be seen from the surf habitus as modern.

The film begins with an older male Portuguese-speaking narrator describing a group of young friends looking for a *terra de nunca* wave on a deserted island. *Terra de nunca* is a reference to the magical island of Neverland from J.M. Barrie’s children’s story *Peter Pan*. The narrator explains the five rules that the boys must learn to be successful in finding the perfect wave: ‘Rule 1: Learn how to anchor a boat, a smooth approach will improve morale with the locals’ (translated into English in subtitles). In this scene, the small fishing launch they arrive in is wrecked on the sand and buffeted by incoming waves, and the surfers watch their guides pull the boat up onto the sand. From this very moment of arrival, the film separates the surfers from the locals. The word ‘morale’ in particular implies that the surfers are the leaders of an expedition and that the locals are their porters when the truth is that the film crew are paying clients of a local surf-tourism company. A shaky camera shows locals trying to stabilise the boat and lift it onto the sand while the surfers splash around nearby as observers before finally pitching in on the final push. It is unclear whether one of the film crew was asked to anchor the boat and did

not do so, or if Rule 1 is a tongue-in-cheek critique of a mistake made by the boat crew. It seems unlikely that the boat crew would ask the young surfers to be in charge of something as important as dropping anchor in rough waters but Rule 1, nonetheless, establishes the hardship and challenge of reaching *terra de nunca*.

Rule 2 is 'Learn about camouflage, this will give you advantages in your hunt for food' (translated in subtitles). In this sequence, Yago Dora, Gonçalves, and Silveira have daubed their faces with mud and run through the jungle with sticks. They run into the water and throw their sticks as if they are spear-hunting fish in the shallows. While Rule 1 has some relationship to reality, Rule 2 falls entirely within the fantasy of 'savages' surviving on a tropical island. The surf-tourism company that brought the surfers and film crew to the island also provisions their camp, so there is no actual need to hunt for food as they do not need to even so much as catch a fish during their stay. By covering their bodies in mud, and leaping about, the surfers enact a transformation into 'savages', though many viewers will not see the mud on their skin as the face paint of tribal hunters but rather as a racist performance of dark-skinned native islanders. The use of this dark face paint reinforces the surfers' Western, white-skinned sense of superior identity.

Rule 3 is 'Don't forget that coconuts can kill' (translated in subtitles). The surfers, still covered in mud, walk down a jungle trail with their boards while someone in a coconut palm high above throws coconuts at them as the film speed is slightly increased for comedic effect. The surfers then grab opened coconuts and stuff their faces while laughing, with food spilling out of their mouths.

In Rule 4, the narrator states, 'You weren't the first person to arrive in the area, so pay respect to the local traditions' (translated in the subtitles). In this sequence, Leandro Dora, his face caked in mud and wearing a coconut husk for a hat, mimes teaching the boys a Polynesian or perhaps Maori war dance with a large stick. The surfers all wear crude grass skirts over their board shorts and their faces are again painted with mud. They stand at attention and then repeat their instructor's slashing movements as if they were in savage military training. The scene is reminiscent of military recruits learning to fight from a boot-camp instructor mixed with exaggerated nonsensical shouts that are meant to seem Polynesian or Maori. Dora shouts in a fake primitive accent, *Aki nós é malaco, nós não arranha carro porque não tem carro, só pode chamar us guerreru* ('Here we are hotshots, we don't scratch up a car because they don't have a car, you can only call us warriors' – author's translation). When Leandro Dora says they can't scratch up a car because the locals don't have one, it suggests that, on this imaginary island, locals could never have cars because then they would not be 'savages'. Talking about not seeing cars to scratch highlights both the pranks the surfers might engage in and the relative poverty of the region. Then Dora leads his students in repeating gibberish and shaking their staffs. In a later cut between surf footage, Gonçalves is shown, still in his mud mask and grass skirt, holding a stick between his legs doing pelvic thrusts.

In this scene, 'respecting the locals' is done through a transposition of Polynesian stereotypes onto their Indonesian locale. The surfers elide their own particular coastal Brazilian, upper-class, light-skinned cultural identity in favour of the 'translocal' surfer identity and they orientalise the specific local island identity by ignoring it. The actual rural, Indonesian Muslims who live on the island are replaced with an exotic, primitive, Polynesian-island stereotype. The scene reinforces the cultural and economic power imbalance between visiting surfers and locals in Indonesia.

The 'Polynesian' war dance in Rule 4 is the most problematic moment in the film, establishing the superiority and condescension felt by the visitors towards the locals. Dora and company are not Brazilians travelling in Indonesia but rather hilarious Western young men on a surfing safari to an exotic tropical island cracking jokes about 'savages'. It reduces the complicated cultural interactions of all surf travel to the idea of Westerners finding clueless locals living without any knowledge of the value of their own waves or even of the modern world. It also highlights race as a factor in the hegemonic relationship between visitor and local, positioning the light-skinned Brazilians as modern, translocal Westerners as they play-act being timeless island 'savages' with darkened skin. Of course, there are no locals present in these scenes of hijinks.

This scene brings to mind Edward Said's concept of Orientalism as the film cast and crew exoticise the island as being out-of-time, uncivilised, animistic and 'Polynesian'. At the same time, they elide the Islam-dominated, Indonesian culture of the island. The likely reason they choose a Pacific Islander stereotype for this act of make-believe is that modern surfing traces its roots to the ancient surfers of the Hawaiian Islands. Said insists that authors who represent the Orient always have to create a strategic location from which to speak:

this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text – all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf.¹³

In the habitus of the translocal surfer, a prank featuring a return to an essential, pre-modern, savage identity traces back to Waikiki rather than to Ipanema. So they are not pretending to be savage Indonesians, but rather pre-modern Polynesians. When they appear in the movie at all, the Indonesian locals are working and struggling to support the film crew. In Rule 1, while the locals are struggling to save their boat, the cameramen film their own hilarious reactions to the crisis. It's worth noting that if the boat sinks, the local crew will suffer economic hardship, but the film expedition will only be inconvenienced by having to wait for another boat to ferry them back to a major city.

Finally, Rule 5 is 'Smile and be grateful because life is always good' (translated in subtitles). The boys here are seen braving stormy weather that threatens to blow away their tents. By employing irony in this last rule, the film minimises the seriousness of the previous scenes, just prior to launching into the first sequences of actual surfing.

During these first minutes, the background music is an electric piano and guitar playing 1960s surf music.

Once the five rules of surfing on an island paradise are established, the film commences the technical shredding of perfect Indonesian waves and the narrator is not heard again. At this point, the film changes the relationship between the surfers and the islanders. Now, the former appear as friendly guests who put on an impressive show on the waves. By the end of the film, there are people around and we have seen many shots of Indonesian children watching the surfers from the sand. Both surfers and the children throw each other *shaka* (Hawaiian) hand greetings. According to 'the crew' in the Surflife.com *Tripwire* feature article about the film, 'The look and energy of the place was amazing ... Every time we would find some village, the natives and the children received us with great joy'.¹⁴

The film crew and the surfers distinguish ‘the natives’ from ‘the children’ in this interview, as if the children are a special category of potential future translocal surfers while the adults are natives, condemned to never be modern or to surf. Said observed this Orientalist phenomenon of Westerners being represented as individuals with unique subjectivity and the people of the Orient being shown in anonymous large groups. Surfers are already romantic individuals in surf films; they are filmed alone on large dangerous waves while onlookers watch from the safety of the shore. The other images on the same page of the *Tripwire* feature include an empty line-up shot from afar – a picture of Silveira walking down the beach alone in front of palm trees, the surfers and the crew gathered around a campfire and a shot of Yago Dora teaching four smiling local children to surf on his board.

The implication in the film is that the locals enjoy having the surfers visit and are awed by their surfing skills, though the truth is probably that the locals would like to promote their waves as a destination for more tourists, a goal the film does not help them with. It does not identify the break, nor does it name the island beyond saying it is in Indonesia. It also does not show the name of the touring company that brought them there, preferring to preserve the secret of the *terra de nunca*. By omitting these facts, the film evokes Said’s concern that Orientalism is a discourse based on an unequal power relationship. In this case, the filmmakers are paying patrons and can represent the island as an uninhabited *terra de nunca* if they wish because the local islanders do not get a voice.

For the islanders, the presence of surfers in their community represents economic opportunity. According to Ralph Buckley:

Adventure tourism in general is ... increasing in economic significance worldwide, and particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Surf tourism is a growing component of the adventure tourism sector, and Indo-Pacific islands offer some of the world’s best surfing opportunities. For many small islands, surfing is no longer just an unusual and entertaining activity carried out by occasional and generally impecunious wandering foreigners, but a significant opportunity for economic growth.¹⁵

It is likely that the locals are not unaware of surfing’s impact on the regional economy. Though the film highlights the wilderness of the campsite, in some of the scenes the viewer can see roads, a shop with a television on and dozens of Indonesian adults and children.

In accordance with Bourdieu’s theory, the locals are likely well aware of their region’s surf value. They know what the surfing habitus looks like, and what surf tourism (economic capital) means to their economy. How could the local children throw *shaka* hand greetings if they had never seen surfers before? Notably, one of the men trying to save the boat in Rule 1 is wearing a T-shirt advertising a Mentawai island surf resort. Within the genre of surfing films set on islands, local residents facilitate visitors’ surfing experience but then are edited out in order for the visitors to enact the fantasy of discovering an uninhabited surfers’ paradise.

The footage of empty surf breaks does not really prove that the island is unsurfed; American Bob Koke had introduced surfing to Indonesia in the late 1930s and Bali has been a surf destination since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, the Indian Ocean-facing beaches of Indonesia contain some of the most storied waves on the planet. The guides working for the charter company that brought the surfers to the island will have surfed there before in order to understand the safety concerns at the

site. If surfers in the local community, or other surf-charter groups, were in the water at the same time then they would have been edited out of the footage to preserve the central concept of the film.

Surf trip films all share a common ancestry with Bruce Brown's *The Endless Summer* (1966), which created this subgenre of the Western surfer exploring different parts of the world to find idyllic waves. In *The Endless Summer*, California surfers Robert August and Michael Hynson travel around the world chasing the endless summer – from Waikiki, to Malibu, Dakar, Lagos, Durban, Brisbane, Raglan and finally Tahiti. Their interactions with locals in Senegal and Nigeria, who had never seen surfing before on their beaches, read like a tale of proselytising pioneers teaching locals about their own environments. For surf media, they are the original translocal surfers. Numerous subsequent surf films repeat this trope of Western surfers proselytising surf practice, environmental values and masculine oceanic bravery to non-Western locals.

Early surf films like *The Endless Summer* are the ancestors of all surf media, and all surf media where Western surfers travel to non-Western surf breaks negotiate similar issues of racial representation. *Um Filme de Surfe's* Brazilian surfers, who are light-skinned even though they also come from a country with a legacy of colonialism, re-enact August and Hynson showing locals in Senegal a surfboard with Indonesian islanders. While the film could have been an opportunity for visiting Brazilian surfers to demonstrate a cosmopolitan modernity infused with empathy for other non-Western cultures,¹⁶ their darkened skin hijinks highlights racial difference and their purported superiority over the islanders. And their focus on children watching them surf implies that the locals need to be taught to be modern like them. A brief shot of Yago Dora helping a child catch whitewater on his board demonstrates the one-directional flow of surf habitus from the modern surfers to the locals who lack it. These brief shots allow the 'expedition' members to appear to 'give back' and be virtuous. They are the formerly colonised now acting as cultural colonisers.¹⁷

Zanin and Dora do not present images of local surf culture. This in itself is not uncommon as Western surf films set in Indonesia usually erase local surfers by denying them representation. An example of this appears in *Surfing the September Session* (2000) by Jack Johnson, featuring Kelly Slater and Rob Machado, among others, on a charter trip to Indonesia.¹⁸ In this film, Machado and Slater reflect on the spiritual importance of getting away from the pressures of the world tour.¹⁹ Throughout their mystical and cryptic enunciations about escaping the hectic modern world, the word Indonesia is never uttered. The only marker of place in the film is an image of the charter boat and the occasional local fisherman passing by in a canoe. This erasure, albeit incomplete, mimics a tradition that reaches back to Alby Falzon and David Elfick's *Morning of the Earth* (1971), the first major surf film to showcase the world-class break Uluwatu on the island of Bali.²⁰ *Morning of the Earth* has no dialogue or narrative framing device and the only marker of place in it are shots of surfers walking down a hill through the jungle with local men and women carrying pots on their heads to reach the break.

Surf films made since the 1990s produced by American, Australian or other Western surfers often include segments from Indonesia because of its excellent surf, and they sometimes attempt to show awareness of local surf culture. Nathan Myers' *The More Things Change* (2017),²¹ which focuses on Gerry Lopez, one of the pioneers of surfing in Bali from the 1970s, has Lopez returning to Bali after two decades to discover the changes

brought about by Western and local developers turning the area into a centre for surf tourism. While the film is from a Western perspective, it emphasises the unique identity of Uluwatu to the field of surfing and has an explicit environmental focus; its sponsors include Project Clean Uluwatu and outdoor clothing company Patagonia. Uluwatu itself – the peninsula, the surf break and the cave one must go through to get to the break – is presented as a sacred area. At one point, Lopez says, ‘That cave is so magic, I don’t know if any of you ever spent time in it, but it is a pretty psychedelic place’. Nevertheless, Indonesians are tangential to this film too. Almost all of the people interviewed are Western expatriates while Indonesians appear as silent, industrious neighbours greeting Western surfers with a smile. The one exception is Balinese former professional surfer Rizal Tanjung, who has featured in surf films, such as *Loose Change* (1999) and *Stranger than Fiction* (2015), and has his own clothing line. In *The More Things Change*, however, he is not interviewed about the development of Bali despite being a local; his comments are only about his respect for Gerry Lopez.

In *Satay Sessions*, a Surfline.com webisode from 2017 by Timmy Toes, American surfers Ian Crane, Dylan Goodale and Evan Gieselman share the waves of Bali with local professional surfers Usman Trioko, Mega Semadhi and Made Adi Putra-Bol.²² *Satay Sessions* has no narrative framing device; it is just surfing footage. But by including some Balinese professional surfers it shows some respect for Indonesian – if not explicitly Balinese – surf culture. Produced by Reef clothing company, *Mixed Tape* (2006) also features a segment shot in Indonesia with local Balinese professional Betet.²³ Betet is interviewed about his admiration of and friendship with former WCT contest winner Bobby Martinez, who is Mexican-American and often surfs in board shorts decorated with the Mexican flag. Betet says, ‘I would like to be the Balinese Bobby’. There is a sense of solidarity between Martinez and Betet and this shows that surf movies can foster empathy, intercultural dialogue and empowerment for non-dominant races and cultures enveloped in the Western, white-dominated field of surfing.

According to Anderson, ‘There is a growing recognition by surfers that all aspects of the surfing identity should be reconciled by showing respect for both local surf breaks and their associated terrestrial cultures’.²⁴ While *Mixed Tape* is an example of this, the makers of *Um Filme de Surfe* do not find any Indonesians surfing, perhaps because to find locals in the line-up would have ruined the pretense of discovering the perfect, empty wave.

Surf movies may also contain a narrative arc about ‘the changing of the guard’, where ‘groms’ (young surfers) develop into young men and women. Yago Dora’s progression from grom to professional athlete is a theme of *Um Filme de Surfe*. Professional surfers live on winnings from competitions and payments from their sponsors. His WSL success put him in the surfing public’s eye, and apparel-sponsored films such as *Um Filme de Surfe* aim to exploit and expand his personal brand.²⁵ The film sells his potential future success to sponsors by focusing on his rite of passage, which features the semi-serious rules given by the narrator, and the hijinks and pranks of the young surfers as they ‘learn’ each rule. These acts bookend surfing sequences and sometimes give narrative structure to their film. John Remy calls the phenomenon of young men forming a male society through hijinks and pranks a ‘fratriarchy’. According to him, this group is dominated by an age-set of men who have yet to take on the responsibility of having a family and are primarily interested in fun.²⁶

The formation of young male group identity is a commonplace of action sports films. Holly Thorpe looks at fraternity in snowboarding media, in which young men behave in reckless and hedonistic ways on the slopes in order to prove their masculinity to each other. In her study, she finds that

Physical prowess, risk taking, and a 'hard-core' images (e.g. hedonistic and party lifestyle, disregard for authority, heterosexual pursuits, and high jinks) are all important aspects of the fraternal masculinity embodied by many professional male boarders and endorsed by the media.²⁷

The same could easily be said for many surf movies, like *Um Filme de Surfe*.

Thorpe notes the ripple effect that the violent or disgusting hijinks (or both) of Sean Kearns and Sean Jackson's *Whiskey* snowboarding and skateboarding films of the 1990s had on action sports films.²⁸ The first in the series, *Whiskey: The Movie from 1994*, begins with a young man unsuccessfully trying to break a beer bottle over his head to the laughter of his bros, and many of the action scenes are intercalated with shots of young men drinking booze until they vomit. Though not as disgusting as the *Whiskey* films, fraternal celebration of gross behaviour can also be found in *Um Filme de Surfe*. For Rule 3, the boys make an exotic show out of unsuccessfully cutting open coconuts with machetes and when they get one open they messily shove food in their mouths until they throw up chunks of coconut on the ground.

While *Um Filme de Surfe* features the boys almost exclusively, the role of Leandro Dora as the Polynesian war chant instructor in Rule 4 shows the role of the group elder forming and encouraging their fraternity. The boys line-up and repeat after him as he teaches them to be 'savage' warriors in this ridiculous acting out of a rite of passage. The patriarchal figure prepares the boys (though they are all in their 20s) to become bros – endorsing and encouraging fraternity as their inheritance. Their masculine hijinks – all set up and filmed by Zanin and Leandro Dora – include shots of the three youths in a coconut bombardment, the 'Polynesian' war-dance lesson of Rule 4, shaking the tents of sleeping comrades and hopping onto the backs of motorcycles with their surfboards (though the local drivers always face away from the camera).

In the credits, they gather together in a structure that was not visible when they introduced their 'wilderness' campsite and toast their endeavours with cold beers. In sum, these hijinks and pranks, accompanied by upbeat surf music, create an atmosphere of fun-loving fraternity. They are hyper-masculine, but compared to the fraternity of the *Whiskey* videos, they are non-threatening and much less self-destructive. As the viewer is reminded in Rule 5, they are there for a good time. Certainly, the entire endeavour revolves around Zanin and Leandro Dora promoting the young men to potential sponsors. The film creates a rite-of-passage narrative to show the surfers mastering the habitus of surfing administered by the grown-ups, where boys become men because they have mastered the five rules of surfing the waves of the *terra de nunca*. And to master the habitus of masculinity, the boys must succeed in the activities of the fraternity.

The only females in *Um Filme de Surfe* are a handful of local children watching and smiling from afar. Participation in this particular constructed fraternity is limited to elders and young men engaged in pranks, hijinks, endless beer and campfire camaraderie. Mothers, sisters, wives and girlfriends were not invited on the trip. Remy's description of fraternity highlights the lack of women around a pack of young males. With some

notable exceptions, women make infrequent appearances in extreme sport films. They are usually attractive and silent consorts of successful male athletes, implying that these young men are irresistible to women, but prefer to spend most of their time without them. In *the Endless Summer*, Mike Hynson suggestively drives off with a local surfer girl in Australia while Robert August remains alone stranded on the beach. In *Whiskey 1* (1994), snowboarding action-sequences are separated by clips of breasts from a pornographic movie. Though these are extreme examples, it is common for surf media to feature female professional athletes based on their modelling of lifestyle apparel as much as their technical performance, such as in *Sea Sun Flower* (2015) by Pablo Aguiar and Manoela D'Almeida.²⁹ In this Brazilian surf film set in Costa Rica, the action sequences are not intercalated with narrative or hijinks but rather with shots of Alana Parcelli, Claudia Gonçalves and other women surfers taking slow-motion showers in their sponsors' bathing apparel. *Um Filme de Surfe*, in contrast, simply elides women from the screen.

* * *

Brazil remains affected by coloniality in many respects, and Brazilian writers, musicians and artists produce content that often emphasises the diversity or uniqueness of Brazilian identities. But the field of surfing in Brazil is subsumed by many of the toxic traditions of the Western surfing habitus. In *Um Filme de Surfe*, I find echoes of the cultural blindness of Western surfers in search of the perfect tropical wave. These issues are common to surf movies set in Indonesia, including *Surfing the September Session*, *Morning of the Earth*, and *The More Things Change*. The patriarchy of *Um Filme de Surfe* also shares ancestry with the misogyny of early surf movies, such as *Endless Summer* and in the hijinks of the *Whiskey* snowboarding movies.

Technically, *Um Filme de Surfe* is a highlight in the burgeoning field of Brazilian surf media. The quality of the surfers' technique and impressive filming and editing put the movie alongside the best international surf-media content. But the filmmakers opt to identify themselves as translocal rather than Brazilian. And the caricature of a Pacific war dance on an island in the Indian Ocean is an example of the blindness and lack of empathy that translocal surfers have towards the non-Western cultures of the locales of surfing. The filmmakers could have decided to make a movie about a trip to an Indonesian island where they find perfect waves and surf with professional Indonesian surfers. Their Brazilian identity could have been part of the narrative, and the culture of surfing in Indonesia could have been an asset rather than an absence. Instead, the filmmakers decided to pay respect to their own translocal culture of surfing and to the patriarchy of male professional extreme athletes. It seems Zanin and Dora themselves never mastered Rule 4, 'You weren't the first person to arrive in the area, so pay respect to the local traditions'.

Notes

1. Bruno Zanin and Leandro Dora, *Um Filme de Surfe*, Vimeo.com, uploaded by Bruno Zanin, 2016 (accessed 4 August 2017).
2. Surf progression is the terminology for the moves done in surfing, the idea being that professionals are trying to progress their moves with more spins, more flips and so forth.
3. Bruce Brown, *The Endless Summer*, Bruce Brown Films, 1966 (DVD 1990).

4. John Remy, 'Patriarchy and Fratriarchy as Forms of Androcracy', in *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, Jeff Hearn and D H S Morgan (eds), London: Unwin Hyman, 1990.
5. The habitus of the contemporary surfing world is determined by the surf industry. Most surf companies are located in large coastal cities like Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro or Sydney though they have financial interests in tropical surfing destinations. Hawaii is the spiritual home of surfing, a tropical wave-magnet, and also has a major surf industry based in Honolulu and the north shore of Oahu. According to Ralph Buckley, affluent, older male surfers from these wealthy regions travel to comparatively poorer and racially different surf destinations such as Nicaragua, Tahiti, the Maldives and Indonesia, where they often stay at exclusive surf-centric resorts or on charter boats. With the notable exceptions of surfers from Brazil, Hawaii and Japan, the surf industry is dominated by white-skinned, Western professional surfers, photographers and retailers. As surfing has increasingly become a component of a commodified lifestyle, retailers based in the capitals of the surf industry face competition to impress consumers. With so much wealth at stake and with the plummeting cost of creating, editing and releasing digital surf movies online, the production of surf movies has skyrocketed. Most professional surfers maintain a social-media presence with professionally edited clips from their competitions, free-surfs at home, and from surf trips to exotic waves.
6. Jon Anderson, 'Surfing Between the Local and the Global: Identifying Spatial Divisions in Surfing Practice', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39(2), 2014, p 242.
7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977; also Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014.
8. Surf movies often exclusively focus on the bodies of surfers riding waves. Robert Rinehart, 'Surf Film, Then & Now: From *The Endless Summer* to *Slow Dance*', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 39(6), 2015, pp 545–561, describes this phenomenon as surf porn:

The constant repetition of (usually male) surfers riding a barrel, or just surfing, without narrative device or framing; the use of endless loops; the use of slo-mo to stretch out a peak moment unrealistically; the absence of women as active participants in favor of them as passive objects; an illogical use of ambient music – these are some of the main tropes of what might be characterized as constitutive of surf porn. Many of the surf films ... have largely contained a series of repeatable loops, much like the repeatable loops seen in contemporary sexual pornography films. (p 557)

These films have no dialogue and make no attempt at representing either translocal or local surf culture. They are simply bodies in motion. Nevertheless, the identity of these silent surfers is important. A surf movie showcasing the talents of female surfers, or non-white surfers represents the actual field of surfing better than a focus on white male, 20-year-olds from the Gold Coast of Australia or Huntington Beach California. *Um Filme de Surfe*, after the initial scenes of the five rules, sticks to these loops of Dora, Gonçalves and Silveira on the waves. The only frame of reference is the progression of the manoeuvres and how they are edited to fit the background music.

9. Anderson, 'Surfing Between the Local and the Global', p 243.
10. Zanin and Leandro Dora are professional photographers making a slick, HD surf movie for widespread dispersal on the Internet with the financial support of two multinational clothing manufacturers. During the credits the film shows the boys reviewing their footage on laptops (even though the conceit of the film is that their camp is in the wilderness). This leads to the idea of prosumption, or when consumers of cultural products are themselves producers of the same content. Part of the narrative of the expedition is the act of creating and editing online content that highlights their sponsors' products. Yago Dora, Gonçalves and Silveira are picking the best shots of themselves for their individual social-media accounts. They are intent on converting the symbolic capital of their surf ability and counter-culture mystique into the economic capital of success in the surf industry. In one scene the cameraman films another cameraman filming a surfer. Being a presumptive media producer and having a personal online brand is part of how they orient themselves in the habitus of professional surfing. The media packaging of the surf trip they take to the *terra de nunca* exists in

different formats in order to gain as much exposure as possible. Still photographs taken from the trip were packed for features in different online and print publications, both in Portuguese and in English. As the monthly winner of Surflines's Tripwire surf-travel documentary competition, Dora and Zanin won a five-night trip for two to Salina Cruz, Mexico to the Waterways Inc. surf resort.

11. Julian Azulay, *Península Mitre*, Gauchos del Mar, Netflix, 2016 (accessed 17 July 2018).
12. The Gauchos del Mar are brothers Julián and Joaquín Azulay, who trek with surfboards on their backs along the cliffs and remote surf breaks of Mitre Peninsula in this Netflix film shot in southern Argentina. Along the way they stop and explore the few remote homes of the region where residents survive largely off the grid.
13. Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books, 2003, p 20.
14. *Tripwire*, p 21.
15. Ralph Buckley, 'Surf Tourism and Sustainable Development in Indo-Pacific Islands', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10, 2002, p 418.
16. There is a long history of creative appropriation of Western cultural ideas to create uniquely Brazilian cultural products, as is evidenced by the modernists of the 1920s, the Manifesto Antropófago, and Tropicalia music.
17. The idea of the surfer-as-evangelist is not new. Legendary native Hawaiian and Olympic gold medalist swimmer Duke Kahanamoku popularised surfing in California and Australia in the 1910s. But Kahanamoku was a member of a marginalised group, native Hawaiians, and his success as an Olympian paved the way for his acceptance in white-dominated societies. It is his figure that the field of surfing considers the pinnacle of virtue, the true waterman.
18. Jack Johnson, *The September Sessions*, The Moonlight Conspiracy Films, 2002.
19. Though the basic recipe of surf movies evolves slowly through the progression of the sport, a framing device is often what differentiates surf films from forgettable surf porn. Often it is based on celebrating the histories and traditions of the habitus of surfing, such as a memorable swell hitting a particular break or a biography of a notable surfer. The notion of surfing being a semi-spiritual practice is devolved from ancient Hawaiian traditions and this pseudo-spirituality is evident in many films. In one memorable film, Jason Baffa's *Singlefin: Yellow* (Singlefin Productions, 2003), the protagonist is actually a yellow single-fin longboard mailed to six professional surfers consecutively in different countries. The concept of the film is that the surfers are surprised by the mysterious gift, film a session at their local break on it, and then pass the board on. The karmic pseudo-spirituality of passing a gift on to the next person is the framing device of the film. The camera is always focused on the board, from its shaping to its packaging and mailing, to being first unwrapped by a surprised looking Australian longboard champion Nat Young. In a sense, the surfers are accessories to the board.
20. Albert Falzon, *Morning of the Earth*, Eungai Creek, NSW, 1971 (DVD 2008).
21. Nathan Myers, *The More Things Change*, Patagonia.com, 2017 (accessed 17 July 2018).
22. [22] Timmy Toes, *Satay Sessions*, Surflines.com, 2017 (accessed 4 August 2017).
23. Pete Santa María, *Mixed Tape*, Koastal Media, DVD, 2006.
24. Anderson, 'Surfing Between the Local and the Global', p 246.
25. According to Robert Rinehart ('Surf Film Then and Now: From The Endless Summer to Slow Dance', *Journal of Sport and Social Justice Issues* 39(6), 2015), contemporary surf movies that aspire to be more than surf porn show surfers who also appeal to the general public's loosely based concept of counter-culture or outsider identity. To be an iconic surfer in this light does not necessarily mean dropping out of society or becoming a delinquent, but to perform the identity of a counter-cultural surfer often means looking and acting that way. A surfer who aspires to make a living through sponsorships and media creation is going to think carefully about their positioning in the field of surfing and will follow the predispositions of what they know of surfing habitus in order to maximise their resonance to their targeted audience of both surfers and non-surfing consumers.
26. Remy, 'Patriarchy and Fraternity'.

27. Holly Thorpe, 'Bourdieu, Gender Reflexivity, and Physical Culture: A Case of Masculinities in the Snowboarding Field', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 34(2), 2010, p 187.
28. Sean Kearns and Sean Jackson, *Whiskey 1*, Youtube.com, uploaded by Majordredd, 1994 (accessed 4 August 2017).
29. Pablo Aguiar and Manoela D'Almeida, *Sea Sun Flower*, Vimeo.com., uploaded by Bulletree Filmes, (accessed 17 November 2015).

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