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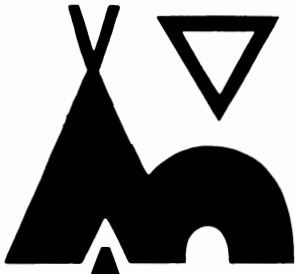

Anthropologica

WOMEN'S WORDS, WOMEN'S LIVES

FEATURE ARTICLES

BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

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Women's Words, Women's Lives

BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

WOMEN'S STORIES AND BOASIAN TEXTS: THE OJIBWA ETHNOGRAPHY OF RUTH LANDES AND MAGGIE WILSON*

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Abstract: The conventional interpretation of Ruth Landes's 1930s writings on Ojibwa culture is that Landes described the society as individualistic, "atomistic" and conflict-ridden. Contemporary and subsequent ethnographers disputed this interpretation and instead emphasized co-operative and egalitarian social relations. This article argues that conflict in Landes's ethnography be read less as a representation of Ojibwa culture itself than as a product of tensions between three storytelling practices: the Boasian textual tradition; Ojibwa women's storytelling; and the cultural script for American daughters of Russian Jewish immigrants (like Landes). The article describes how these storytelling practices mediated the collaboration between anthropologist Ruth Landes and her key informant Maggie Wilson. It further argues that the key to understanding the collaboration is not their gender but rather the marginalization that both women experienced as individuals within their own cultural contexts. Widely differing though these contexts were, it was their shared understanding of outsider status that enabled Ruth Landes and Maggie Wilson to explore the terrain of conflict and contradiction in the lived experience of culture.

Résumé: L'interprétation conventionnelle des écrits de Ruth Landes publiés dans les années 30 et portant sur la culture Ojibwée voit cette société comme individualiste, «nucléaire» et conflictuelle. Des ethnographes contemporains à Landes et d'autres ultérieurs ont critiqué cette interprétation et ont mis de l'avant les relations sociales égalitaires et coopératives. Cet article avance que le conflit existant dans l'ethnographie de Landes ne provient guère d'une représentation de la culture Ojibwée elle-même, mais plutôt qu'elle est le résultat de tensions existantes entre trois types de pratiques narratives: la tradition textuelle boasienne; les «conteuses» ojibwées et le texte culturel destiné aux filles américaines d'ascendance russe et juive (comme Landes elle-même).

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L'article décrit comment ces pratiques narratives ont servi à la collaboration entre l'anthropologue Ruth Landes et son informatrice principale Maggie Wilson. La clé de cette collaboration n'était pas due à leur sexe mais plutôt à la marginalisation des deux femmes dans leur propres contextes culturels. Bien que ces contextes aient été très différents c'était leur compréhension commune du statut de l'étranger qui a permis aux deux femmes Ruth Landes et Maggie Wilson d'explorer le terrain du conflit et de la contradiction dans l'expérience culturelle vécue.

Introduction

In the summer of 1932, two women met at Manitou Rapids on the Rainy River between Fort Frances and Kenora in northwestern Ontario, on the international border. One was Maggie Wilson, a grandmother in her 50s, of Scots-Cree descent, who had lived her entire life in an Ojibwa cultural context and had thrice married Ojibwa men. The other was Ruth Landes, a 23-year-old student of anthropology who had been born and raised in New York City, the daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants, and who had recently separated from her young medical-student husband. During the summers of 1932 and 1933 and, through correspondence, until 1935 when Landes last visited Mrs. Wilson, the two women collaborated in developing an ethnographic portrait of Ojibwa culture. The result was three books authored by Landes: the first, *Ojibwa Sociology*, published in 1937, incorporated Landes's Ph.D. dissertation in anthropology for Columbia University; the second, *The Ojibwa Woman*, was published the following year in 1938; and the third, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midéwiwin*, was not published until 1968. Landes also published three scholarly articles on the Ojibwa including "The Ojibwa of Canada," which was solicited for the volume, *Cooperation and Conflict among Primitive Peoples*, edited by Margaret Mead and published in 1937 (see also Landes 1937c; 1938b).

The conventional reading of the ethnography that resulted from the Wilson-Landes collaboration is that Ojibwa culture is represented as individualistic, conflict-ridden and set in a context of isolation and harsh environmental conditions. The texts describe individual (as opposed to group or communal) decision-making, competitive social relations and the harshness of lives subjected to starvation and chronic illness. "Atomistic" is the adjective that has become associated with Landes's Ojibwa, a reference to the importance Landes gives to the individual as the primary unit in Ojibwa society. Atomism has been much disputed, and subsequent ethnographers have emphasized cooperation (not individualism) and egalitarian (not atomistic) social relations, often based upon a cultural ecological model of a hunting and trapping society (Dunning 1959; Hickerson 1962, 1967a; Leacock 1978; Rogers 1969). Atomism and individualism, where they occur, are seen to be historical products of

fur-trade dependency and colonization, not characteristic of aboriginal, early-contact social organization (Bishop 1974; Hickerson 1967b). Like her Boasian contemporaries, Landes tended to employ an ahistorical model of culture. Behaviour and institutions observed in the 1930s were often interpreted as traditional, even though conditions of poverty, unemployment, cash dependency and the presence of missionary and government officials were noted.

Ruth Landes's early ethnographic interest in women and gender was also scrutinized. The review of *The Ojibwa Woman* in *American Anthropologist* charged that the work represents "an idiosyncratic female viewpoint" and is "less than scientific" (Alexander 1975:111). More recently, feminist anthropologists have disputed Landes's Ojibwa ethnography. In a 1980 essay reviewing the literature on Native American women, Rayna Green acknowledges Landes as a pioneer in the cross-cultural study of sex roles but dismisses her work as "flawed and male-centred" (Green 1980). Eleanor Leacock, writing on the status of women in hunter-gatherer societies, criticized Landes for a "lack of critical and historical orientation" and for "undermin[ing] her own contribution to the understanding of sex roles . . . through the downgrading of women that is built into unexamined and ethnocentric phraseology" (1978: 251). Both of these critiques remove Landes from her historical context, from the Boasian androcentrism and relativism of the 1930s, and evaluate her against measures of late 20th-century American feminist scholarship.

My purpose in this article is to suggest an alternate reading of Landes's Ojibwa ethnography. My reading is motivated by Donna Haraway's notion of "storytelling practices" and based on the published work as well as on the over 100 stories that Maggie Wilson sent as letters to Ruth Landes in New York between 1932 and 1935.[1]

In her book *Primate Visions* Donna Haraway writes that "One story is not as good as another" and argues that "Scientific practices are story telling practices with a particular aesthetic, realism, and a particular politics, commitment to progress" (1989:331). In Haraway's terms, storytelling practices are "historically specific practices of interpretation and testimony." Feminist literary critics, on the other hand, write of the "micropolitical practices" (de Lauretis 1984) at work in women's autobiographical storytelling. Biddy Martin describes these "microcultural politics" as "practices of self-representation which illuminate the contradictory, multiple construction of subjectivity at the intersections, but also in the interstices of ideologies of gender, race, and sexuality . . ." (1988:2). Here I view ethnography as the scientific storytelling of anthropologists. I see the collection of stories by anthropologists and the telling of stories by informants as necessarily engaging micropolitical practices. I suggest that we see the telling of ethnographic stories as involving subjective practices of self-representation on the part of both anthropologist and informant. When we begin to look for the ideologies of race, gender and sex-

uality that both intersect and comprise the telling (and hearing) of stories, we begin to see that historically, as in the present, multiple stories have contested for centre stage.

What were the storytelling practices that guided the dialogue and collaboration of Maggie Wilson and Ruth Landes at Manitou Rapids in the 1930s? What were the practices of self-representation that informed the stories that Mrs. Wilson told the young white woman from New York? What were the storytelling practices that both enabled and constrained Ruth Landes's writing about the Ojibwa?

My reading of Landes's work interprets her Ojibwa ethnography as an uneasy mediation of three intersecting storytelling practices: (1) the practice of the Boasian text tradition; (2) the storytelling that was central to the cultural and imaginative life of Ojibwa women; and (3) the script for women in American society—and more specifically in Russian Jewish immigrant society. My argument is that conflict and cultural contestation in Landes's Ojibwa texts be read less as a representation of Ojibwa culture itself than as a reflection of tensions between these three storytelling practices. These tensions, it is also to be noted, are further contextualized through recognition that storytelling practices are premised upon and intersected in important ways by differing experiences of gender, class, race, ethnicity, age and other factors.

I note here that, for the heuristic purposes of this article, I am giving 1930s American ethnography a "Boasian" voice in order to contrast scientific storytelling in the discipline of anthropology with the voices heard in the storytelling of Ojibwa women or of Russian Jewish immigrant women. This is not to dispute the well-known multivocality of the Boasian text tradition. As Regna Darnell has written: "Many voices add up to more than the sum of their parts, to more than subjectivity. This has always been the foundational premise of anthropology as a cross-cultural discipline" (1992:46). My re-reading of Landes's Ojibwa ethnography is intended to support Darnell's view of Boasian ethnography, and Landes herself identified as a Boasian. Nonetheless, the search for one truth was an imagined ideal of Boasian ethnography, as it was of modernist science, and I believe Landes was trying to meet this imagined ideal. My interest is in dissecting the particular identity factors that come into play in the process of collecting stories and of doing field work, and to argue that these remain visible in the finished ethnography. Here I think the autobiographical impulse present in Ojibwa women's storytelling and in Landes's pursuit of anthropology intersect with the goals and practices of Boasian ethnography, and this is what I attempt to show in this article.

Clearly related arguments, which I do not entertain here and which are much discussed in late 20th-century anthropology, concern the subjectivity of "science"; the importance of naming the situated positions of ethnographers and of informants, usually through some form of what Sandra Harding refers

to as "a robust gender-sensitive reflexivity practice" (1989:28); and, ultimately, recognition that a different anthropologist working with a different informant would likely have produced a different ethnographic representation of Ojibwa culture (see, for example, Dunning 1959; Hallowell 1955).

The Boasian Text Tradition

Regna Darnell has called the text tradition "the essence" of Boasian Americanist anthropology (1992:42). The Boasian text tradition is not a literary tradition but rather a method based upon field work, a method that was central to Boas's efforts to professionalize anthropological research methods. The text was a direct transcription in the field by anthropologists of stories told to them by elders. The elders were paid, usually by the day, and anthropologists, often working through a language interpreter, would take direct dictation. The objective was to find in orally transmitted, oft-told tales and stories an understanding of history and psychology in local terms. According to Darnell, Franz Boas adapted the method from the tales of the Brothers Grimm he had heard as a child in Germany. The Brothers Grimm had sought a romanticized national identity in the vernacular of peasants, whose stories they collected and preserved in literary form. Boas envisioned a similar retrieving of cultural identity by anthropologists working in the Native American context. Darnell further argues that working with individuals and directly transcribing their words, resisting synthesis and generalization as Boas did, was an implicit recognition that variability exists in local interpretations. Significantly, according to Darnell, Native American cultures sought to accommodate the greatest possible number of interpretations, rather than seeking conformity to a cultural canon, as European-based societies did.

> The linguist/anthropologist who worked day after day with an old man, occasionally woman, who remembered traditional stories and/or a younger bilingual translator was forced to attend to the construction of a culture in the understanding of a single individual. Moreover, attention to variability of "the culture" as understood by different individuals was entirely consistent with the lack, among most Native Americans of a cultural canon which could, or at least would, label any particular integration of cultural knowledge as invalid (although, of course, some versions were more highly respected within the culture than others). (Darnell 1992:43)

Over time, however, the text method began to be used by Boas's students and successors more to address specific research questions than to represent individual variability and multivocality in cultures. This was clear by 1931 when Ruth Landes came to Columbia University as a graduate student under Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict.

Franz Boas was 72 years old and in frail health after the death of his wife, Marie, in a car accident in December 1929. He was president of the American

Association for the Advancement of Science and, after a trip to Europe in 1932, had begun the campaign against Nazism and race hatred that was to absorb him until his death in 1942. Although he continued to teach and to lobby research funds for the Department of Anthropology at Columbia, the actual supervision of graduate student thesis research was by this time the responsibility of his "right hand," Ruth Benedict (Mead 1959).

Ruth Landes had been attracted to anthropology after meeting Franz Boas through anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser, a family friend who had been one of Boas's first students. Throughout her life, she acknowledged Boas's tremendous influence upon her and her great respect for him. Her vision of anthropology was Boas's vision of anti-racist science, cultural relativism and humanism. But it was Ruth Benedict who supervised Landes's field work, who answered her questions from the field and who ultimately accepted her Ph.D. dissertation. Benedict had an overwhelming influence on Landes's life and on her anthropology. Landes later said that she had transferred to Benedict her prior dependence on her parents. In a letter to Benedict she wrote: "I was never happy until I began to study with you and I owe you far more than my Ph.D. The Ph.D was incidental to the things I was doing through your inspiration . . ." (RFB, November 11, 1939). It was Benedict who proposed that Landes conduct her research among the Ojibwa, and it was Benedict who arranged the funding and made all the necessary contacts for Landes.

In 1931, Ruth Benedict was 44 years old and financially and professionally settled as an assistant professor of anthropology at Columbia. She had finally terminated her childless marriage with Stanley Benedict and recently committed herself to a relationship with Natalie Raymond, a younger woman who had come from California to live with Benedict in New York. Benedict was beginning to write *Patterns of Culture* (published in 1934) and was becoming increasingly interested in asking psychological questions of cross-cultural data. She followed developments in neo-Freudian psychology and especially the work of Karen Horney. She was interested in the dynamic and dialectical relationship between the individual and culture. She was interested in the ways in which some cultures accommodate individual behaviours that are deemed abnormal or deviant in other cultures (notably in American society). The specific behaviours that interested Benedict were homosexuality, trance and spirit possession, paranoia and megalomania (Benedict 1934b). In order to understand these behaviours, Benedict urged that the topics of sexuality and child socialization become as important as the then-standard topics of religion and kinship in the collection of ethnographic data in the field. Benedict thus began to employ the Boasian text method to collect specific kinds of empirical data.

That Benedict placed a relative value on texts or stories is clear as early as 1925 in letters she wrote home to Margaret Mead from Cochiti pueblo:

> . . . there is no trace of the Zuni intensity of feeling. Of course I am getting very unesoteric stories, but if I sit long enough, I don't doubt getting the other kind. . . . (Mead 1959:299)

> Everybody in Cochiti seems to know my occupation and asks how "the old man got on with his stories today?" Now it's the "old woman," for he's been sick these last two days and I like the old woman quite as well. I've had two other offers of informants and I try to squeeze them in—one is especially promising for the esoteric stories. . . . the great problem is to find the rare person who still knows. It isn't as general as it is in Zuni. . . . Stories aren't told night after night as they are in Zuni, and societies and priesthoods are reduced to almost nothing. . . . I pay so little here I can afford to take the tales as they come—only a dollar a three-hour session. (Ibid.:302)

> My last informant tonight didn't leave me to cook my dinner till eight o'clock. . . . I've been taking nine hours' dictation right along, except Sunday, for the last ten days—a goodly bulk. But the tales I'm really curious about I don't get—the Katchina stories—I'm thankful it was Zuni stories and not these I got my thousand pages of, for those are at least rich and earthy with their manners and their religion, and these are rather the recreation of a people without either. The disintegration of culture has gone rather further on the Rio Grande (i.e., at Cochiti) than I'd thought. It makes me more appreciative of the privilege of getting at Zuni before it's gone likewise. (Ibid.:304)

Although a great deal could be said about Ruth Benedict from these quotations, my purpose in giving them here is to illustrate that by the time Ruth Landes entered anthropology, there was a definite notion that "some stories are better than other stories" and that some kinds of ethnographic knowledge have greater scientific utility than others. Although Franz Boas himself appears to have resisted it, in the hands of his students and successors, the formation of an anthropological canon was beginning (Stocking 1974).

In June 1932, Ruth Benedict wrote to Diamond Jenness in Ottawa, director of what was then the Victoria Museum of Canada, that the Columbia University Department of Anthropology had funding for a summer field trip "for one of our students, a married woman whom I can recommend as intelligent and of good judgment." Benedict proposed that Mrs. Landes's field work be undertaken with an Ojibwa group in Canada because they may be "still comparatively uninfluenced," unlike American Chippewa, and she asked if this would meet with Jenness's "approval" and for his suggestions as to specific locations. Jenness responded by suggesting as possible field sites either the Lake of the Woods or the Manitou Rapids Indian Reserves. He asked the Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs to arrange letters of introduction for Landes to the local Indian Agents at Fort Frances and Kenora. Ruth Benedict also arranged a letter of introduction for Landes from ethnologist Father John Cooper of the Catholic University in Washington, who had undertaken a brief field trip to the Rainy River district a few years earlier. Benedict also discussed

the proposed research with Philadelphia anthropologist Irving Hallowell, who was receiving Columbia University funds for field work among the Berens River Ojibwa of Manitoba, and who had visited the Rainy River district in 1931. Hallowell suggested that Manitou Rapids would be a good field site for Landes.

The research appears to have been vaguely conceptualized prior to Landes's going to the field. Benedict was at least partly interested in establishing the geographical limits of the guardian-spirit-vision complex on which she had written her own Ph.D. thesis in 1923. Ojibwa culture was at the time relatively unstudied by ethnologists compared to Plains and Southwest Indian cultures. Landes's letters to Benedict from the field report almost exclusively on two topics: kinship (term equivalences and the occurrence of cross-cousin marriage) and the Midéwiwin religion. Landes was expected to undertake a general ethnographic study in the Boasian tradition, working intensively with one or two informants whose stories (which she would record as texts) would, once analyzed, reveal the patterns of behaviour and belief of the culture. Success of her doctoral field work rested almost entirely upon establishing a working relationship with knowledgeable and sympathetic informants.

Landes arrived in Fort Frances on July 6 and, with the local Indian Agent, visited by car several reserves in the area. She quickly decided that "Hallowell's suggestion was a good one" and that she would stay at Manitou Rapids. Here the Agent helped her to arrange room and board with the Department of Indian Affairs Farm Instructor and his wife, William and Helen Hayes, the one non-Native family living on the reserve. The Indian Agent also recommended as an interpreter a local woman, Mrs. Maggie Wilson. Landes immediately approached Mrs. Wilson, whom she hired at $1.00 per day, initially as an interpreter, and who soon became Landes's chief source of information.[2] Maggie Wilson had previously worked with ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore in 1918 and with Father John Cooper in 1928. She thus came to Landes highly recommended and well trained in the informant-anthropologist relationship.

Maggie Wilson was born about 1879 at the Little Forks Indian Reserve on the Rainy River west of Fort Frances. In 1885 she and her family appear for the first time on the Treaty #3 annuity list at Little Forks. Her mother was the daughter of a Scottish Hudson's Bay Company trader and a woman whom Maggie describes as "a Cree half breed woman." Her father was the son of a bilingual (i.e., English-speaking) Cree teacher who worked at the Anglican mission schools along the Rainy River. She was raised in a Christian family and learned English at an early age. Maggie first married at the age of 16, but her husband died during the first year of marriage. Soon afterward she married another Ojibwa man named Tom Wilson of Hungry Hall, further west on the Rainy River. Little is known of this marriage but that they lived at Hungry Hall

and that Maggie gave birth to three children, two sons and a daughter. Tom Wilson died in 1911. In 1914, when she was 35, Maggie moved with her small children to the Manitou Rapids reserve where she married John Wilson, son of the chief. She had two more children, both daughters, one of whom died in infancy. Maggie Wilson died about 1940.

Mrs. Wilson was locally known as a visionary and as a midwife, a trade she had learned from her mother, a renowned midwife in the region. She was skilled in the manufacture of hides and in quill embroidery, birch bark and bead work which she sold. According to Ruth Landes, Mrs. Wilson had a prodigious memory, a sharp wit and an intellectual bent. By the time she met Landes in the 1930s, Maggie was suffering from a variety of ailments, including dropsy and a lame leg. Her health kept her at home with her family and perhaps caused her to be more of an observer than a participant in community life. Her facility in English had, throughout her life, placed her in the position of spokesperson for other Ojibwa. In her bilingual and bicultural competence she resembled other individuals who have become "key informants" for anthropologists (Brown 1989; Cannizzo 1983; Black-Rogers 1989).

In a letter to Benedict near the end of her second summer in the field, Landes wrote of Maggie Wilson: "I consider her a gem and believe that we will have her with us till she gives up the ghost. I think that by now she is as good an ethnologist as any of us. I gave her some instruction this summer, which she snapped up. She gets the real point of what we want..." (RFB, October 12, 1993).

Landes described Mrs. Wilson in her preface to the second edition of *The Ojibwa Woman* published in 1971:

> ... she was highly skilled in Ojibwa women's crafts, and was furthermore a celebrated visionary.... she loved to ponder and talk reflectively in the Ojibwa's rather whining, nasal, light tones; she embroidered with porcupine quills for which she used native grassy dyes; she embroidered also with trader's beads; she tanned hides of deer, elk and moose, and cut them up for moccasins and "fire bags" (carrying tinder for tobacco); and she bit designs into new birch bark.... Seeing her shining, shrewd black eyes peer through rimless spectacles (worn only when embroidering), one would not have supposed she was a mystic who had produced mighty "dreams." Those eyes, the broad cheekbones, the tight-clamped mouth exposing constant harassment, belonged to her needle-sharp mind, ever at grips with reality. She had a sardonic humour that my young self could record but not truly follow.

Landes continued and acknowledges that she herself was a determining factor in the kind of relationship that was possible for the two women:

> I never supposed that she liked me, but she treated me well in every way. The times were desperately poor, so I made a point of paying her one dollar at the close of each day, besides small extras. She respected this punctilio, which hap-

> pened to coincide with Ojibwa requirements surrounding the relationship of teacher and learner. Her work habits were meticulous and I surmise she respected my own conscientiousness. During the several years I visited her, I never saw her smile. Perhaps it was because I did not truly trust myself to expand, aware always of the language barrier, of the strange Indian presences, of the tom-tom at the gambling games, of the smells and ugliness maintained by chronic destitution.

In her books Landes often reminds us of her youth, her inexperience, her vulnerability and her horror at the poverty and illness that she saw. She also mentions her fear. Henrietta Schmerler, another student of Benedict's, had been killed the previous year (1931) when conducting field work among Apache in Arizona, and a trial, much sensationalized by the press, was then underway. That summer, Boas had written to Benedict: "How shall we now dare to send a young girl out after this?" (Mead 1959:409). For Landes, this was the first time she had left her New York world and the first time she had been on her own without parents or husband. She was also coping with the recent dissolution of her marriage. She is hardly the picture of the all-powerful and omniscient ethnographer.

Landes sought to collect the ethnographic data that Ruth Benedict desired, and Maggie Wilson willingly provided hours of what Benedict would have called "esoteric stories." Mrs. Wilson's visionary experiences, for example, included in 1914 a sequence of nine vision-dreams, each lasting 6 to 10 nights, in which she had been directed to give a dance to save Ojibwa soldiers fighting in World War I. In the visions, 60 supernatural Thunderbirds showed her dance steps and drum sequences, designs for costumes and drums and taught her 80 songs. Maggie Wilson taught the people the dance and the songs and oversaw its performance at Manitou Rapids for seven or eight years. Named the Union Star Dance, the dance was held in the fall and spring when the birds are migrating and a few times it was also held at Christmas and New Year's. The dance lasted for two to four nights each time. Ojibwa men did die in the war, including Mrs. Wilson's own son-in-law, but people believed that more would have died if they had not performed the dance. Although neither Ruth Landes nor Maggie Wilson comment on this, the performance of the Union Star Dance also coincided with the forced relocation and consolidation of seven Rainy River bands at the Manitou Rapids reserve in 1915. Mrs. Wilson said that the first time she had the dream was the first night she "camped" at Manitou.[3]

Maggie Wilson also provided Ruth with over 100 stories of the lives of women she had known or whose life stories were well known among local women. These stories presented a dilemma: gender was unproblematized in the Boasian paradigm of culture but the resonance of Maggie Wilson's stories for Landes could not be ignored. In ethnographic accounts, male and female socialization patterns and occupations were recorded, but it was assumed that

male and female interpretations of gendered experience were shared. Androcentrism was, at the time, assumed on the part of male and female ethnographers, subjects and readers. A graduate student, Landes was attempting to write ethnography that would secure her the status of a professional anthropologist. Field work and the collection of Ojibwa texts was part of her professional training, but anthropological theorizing provided little guidance for the analysis of women's perspectives, or of gender conflict or difference. Similarly, Boasian paradigms offered little assistance in analyzing conflict, contradiction and cultural contestation that are produced in contexts of social and economic change. Instead, the objective was to attempt to reconstruct the essence or ethos of a culture, an essence that was thought to survive in the minds and stories of the elders. So it is that in *The Ojibwa Woman*, Landes describes Ojibwa culture as male-centred; sees the cultural apotheosis as represented by the male shaman; and writes that masculine endeavours are more valued than women's and that while women may seek to and often do excel at masculine pursuits, no men seek recognition for achievement of women's roles. Subverting the potential cohesiveness of this story line, however, is Landes's remarkable assertion that Ojibwa women exist "outside" Ojibwa culture and that:

> The same culture that has laid down a glamorous course for men has provided no distinct line of conduct for women. Women therefore attempt nearly everything available in the culture—and by so doing, alter the formulated nature of much that they engage in, heedless of the occupational demarcation so painstakingly taught to the men. Individual variations among women show up conspicuously as difference in objectives, technical accomplishments, and perseverance; whereas among men such minor variations are only in degree of accomplishment. If men are thought of as the specialized instruments of Ojibwa culture, women are the unspecialized; if men are considered inheritors of the culture's wealth, women are the dispossessed and underprivileged; if men are the material selected arbitrarily to be the finest medium for the expression of Ojibwa ideals, women are second-rate, or perhaps reserve, material. (Landes 1938a:177)

It seems clear that in order to begin to interpret the meaning of conflict and individualism in Landes's Ojibwa ethnography, it is necessary to consider the possibility that it originates in women's subjective experience but perhaps not men's.

Maggie Wilson, Careful Teller of Tales: Ojibwa Women's Storytelling Practice

A reading of Mrs. Wilson's story-letters to Landes reveals that neither Maggie Wilson nor Ruth Landes internalized the assertions of male privilege in the above quotation from *The Ojibwa Woman*. When read intact, Mrs. Wilson's stories construct women as social actors in a world where women's experience

matters. In the published ethnography, however, where androcentrism prevailed in the larger theoretical framework, Landes used only excerpts from these stories. It is instructive now to reread the ethnography in conjunction with the stories as Maggie Wilson had told them. The following story is typical of those Mrs. Wilson sent in letters to Landes in New York:

> This is a story of an Indian woman named [Two Skies]. She was a doctor woman, in Indian, Na na da wii we. She went through a rough life. She got married to an Indian named [Forever Standing]. He was married already so she had a [co-wife]. He was a great hunter and he went out with her to hunt ducks. They upset the canoe and he swam ashore but she hung onto the boat and she was blown away by the wind for about four hours. She came to a grassy point but still she couldn't reach the shore. . . . At last she swam ashore and dragged the boat along 'til finally she landed. She was soaking wet and cold. She had no matches to light a fire and no paddle to use. There was a little wind so she took her clothes off and hung them up to dry. Then she raced around the bush to keep herself warm. She used to say that was the hardest part of it as she was cold and had nothing to eat. She was about nine or ten miles away from home. There were no people close . . . and the wind was blowing against her. So she went along the beach in the canoe with a stick for a paddle. She kept along the shore until it got so dark that she couldn't see at all. She put ashore and . . . lay down and . . . finally she slept. It was daylight when she woke and then the wind was still against her and it was blowing harder than the day before. She kept right on again going the same way and she had about six miles to go yet before she would reach the nearest house. So at last the next evening she finally came to the house. The people gave her a good drink of whiskey and put her to bed and for four days she was unconscious and at last she came to and got better. Her husband came as soon as he heard she got there and then he took her home. So they kept on living that way hunting and fishing. She had three children and every time the child would come to the same age they would die. Her husband would be fighting her, kicking her, and was awfully mean to her. Then his two wives would get after him and they would lick him. Then she parted with him and she started with her Na na da wi i we. She was getting nice things for it. She got along so fine with all kinds of nice things and she was a great woman to tan hides. . . . she went away to the Lake of the Woods and that was where she was living fine when she got in with a young man and married him. . . . They had a little boy and she had to support him herself. He was good for nothing but he was good to her so she had him rigged up in bead work at last so he would trade. . . . the boy was about three years old and . . . in the winter time they came to Hungry Hall. The man she was first married to lived there. He wanted to take her back from her young husband and the old man scared them so much that the young man ran away and she had to go back to the old man but she never did like him. Her little boy got sick and died. He was lonesome for his father. After the boy died she used to fight this old man and he used to say all kinds of wishes so the young man would die. . . . At last they heard that the young man froze to death and soon after that the old man got blind and was sick. Then he died and she was left a widow again and was free from her husbands. Her mother-in-law and father-in-law and the two brothers and sister of this old man wanted her to

stay with them. That fall they went back to their hunting grounds and they nearly starved. They could not even kill a rabbit. It was this other young man's parents that were doing all their bad dreams to make them unlucky so they would starve to death. They were mad 'cause it was this old man's work, the reason why he died. So they moved away and left her there alone 'cause she cut her foot. She didn't have anything to eat. She hardly cut wood for herself. They told her they would come back for her and she waited five days but nobody showed up. So she started off and it took her four days to get there. . . . She knew they were going to make a slave of her. She did everything, cutting wood and tanning hides for them. So she did not stay there at all but went to another place and then from there she went home to where she belonged to and the young man's parents were glad to see her back and were good to her. She made a home with her own parents and sisters and the next summer she went around with her own sister. That was two years after her husband died and she met her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. They fought her. They tore all her clothes and cut her hair and cut up her canoe and tent and beat her. They were mad just because she had on good clothes and was making a good living for herself. That was the style of the Indians long ago. When the husband or wife dies the in-laws take everything the widow has if he or she doesn't give anything in place of the one she married. So after all her bedding and things were taken away from her she sat there and didn't know what to do so she left word there and said that she was going to get married the first chance she had and wasn't going to give them the pile of stuff they wanted her to give them. Some kind people then lent them a canoe to go back with and they went home. She was coming there to make a visit at her old man's grave the time they tore her clothes and canoe but she never came again after that. Then a year after she got married to an older man at Whitefish Bay. He was a widow like herself. . . . He was all kinds of manito kaso-gisuki and Grand Medicine king and a kind of Indian fortune teller. He knew what was going to happen ahead of time and nearly all the time his dreams came true. And he had lots of bad medicine. People used to say that he wished to keep other people's luck and they claimed that he used to make people crazy. Everybody was scared to make him mad and he used to be the only one to kill game or fish and the other people wouldn't kill any thing and that was the reason why people thought him bad. So they kept on like that for many years and he cured lots of people and he was a great old gambler. So she lived there with him all this time as his wife 'til all her in-laws with the first husband . . . were all dead and he put her through the Grand Medicine dance. He got sick with smallpox and died so she was left a widow again and she started with Na na da wi i we doctoring and she was a hunter. She killed furs and fish and made rice and made a good living. She was a real Indian woman. She dressed like an Indian. She dreamed of all kinds of games such as the Indian dice game and snake game and the caribou bone game. She gives these out to her namesakes and she gives out songs she dreams of and all kinds of other games and songs. She did not have any children but just the four that died. None are living. She's still living yet today. She is very old but she's still on her manito kaso and naming lots of children and giving out dance songs and these games of all kinds. She used to make a nice big cooking and pretend she was having a feast with the dead people and she would make a speech over it. Then she would pretend she was

> sending it to the dead people and she would pick the people out that's living and they would eat it and she would say that the God of these dead people would send the dishes back filled with life for them. She had lots of other kinds of feasts and she would make the people believe she had visitors from heaven. When she would doctor anyone she would tell them to go through the Grand Medicine and she would dress them up herself putting red paint and everything on their faces. Sometimes they would live but sometimes they wouldn't get better. She was just trying to keep up the same way as her old man . . . and lots of other rough life that is not fit to tell. She's living alone, hardly any relatives, at Whitefish Bay. She's old and helpless as a baby. Now this is all I know of her. The end.[4]

The stories that Maggie Wilson told Ruth Landes were well known in the local context where most of the details of any person's life were common knowledge. Inevitably, they begin "This is the story of an Indian woman named. . . . It is a true story." Inevitably they tell of hardship and of survival, of women's boldness and resourcefulness in overcoming hardship. Based on the lived experiences of known women, the stories are of being lost or abandoned or running away from an abusive husband, mother, stepmother or co-wife; of enduring cold, starvation, sickness and the deaths of children; of hunting and butchering a moose; of building a canoe and paddling long distances; of constructing a shelter and surviving alone in the wilderness by fishing, snaring rabbits and collecting berries. Often they tell of women who became medical and religious specialists. Mrs. Wilson punctuates the stories at various points with statements like "She was a real Indian woman" and "She lived a rough life." The message is: "She lived a rough life. She overcame the hardships. She was a real Indian woman." Regarding these stories, Landes wrote to Benedict: "I've read only two Wilson stories in the batch . . . and I find these excellent. One is her old and thorough line about the woman deserted, mistreated, rewarded, shamed, combatted over, etc. The theme is damned familiar to us by now . . ." (RFB, March 20, 1935).

The Ojibwa were enduring hard times in the 1930s and women and children especially were suffering. Men were drawn seasonally into wage work in logging and on the steamboats and railroads. Negotiating labour relations and cash and alcohol consumption were part of the Ojibwa world. White, male, Hudson's Bay Company employees and Indian agents were a continuing presence. Government control over household and community life was increasing with the introduction of health and social services. Children were removed from their families to be educated in government schools. Moreover, Ojibwa were still grieving the loss of their lands along the Rainy River. It had been less than a generation ago, in 1915, that the Canadian government had expropriated their lands, relocated the people and consolidated members of seven different bands at the Manitou Rapids reserve. The pressures of living in a large settled community were new and difficult.

Maggie Wilson's stories offer a subjective view of women's experiences that was rare in Boasian texts. As micropolitical practice, Maggie's storytelling served to educate Landes, to witness Ojibwa women's experience and to resist submission and silence. Mrs. Wilson's storytelling was rooted in accepted and fundamental cultural practices of Ojibwa women, for whom stories educate, validate and entertain. Ojibwa women told stories to construct selves, to deconstruct power relations and to claim citizenship.[5] In the preface to *The Ojibwa Woman*, Landes wrote:

> I did not tell her what kinds of stories to report, but she knew from our intensive studies that I wanted the whole life—its warm breath, its traditional forms. She had the storyteller's instinct and a dramatic flair. These biographical accounts are unique as a gifted woman's view of her fellow women, usually under stress. Since the characters come alive despite the crude English, how powerfully they must have emerged in the original Ojibwa!

What led Maggie Wilson to tell these stories to Ruth Landes when she had not told them to other ethnologists (male or female) with whom she had worked? What enabled Landes to hear these stories when other ethnographers of the period, male or female, apparently could not—even if she remained unable effectively to interpret them?

Deborah Gordon (1993) has recently developed a model to describe the relationship between Boasian women anthropologists and native women. According to Gordon, Boasians pursued a liberal reformism and a desire to educate the lay white American public about the conditions of Native Americans in the 1930s. At the same time, there was a desire on the part of women anthropologists to dissociate themselves from complicity in American history—one of whose central themes was the pacification of Native Americans and the expropriation of their land for white settlement. This ambiguity was embodied, Gordon argues, in a maternal relationship wherein Boasian women anthropologists sought to be "loved" by their native women subjects. According to Gordon, (white) American gender ideologies in the 1930s, responding to the problem of male unemployment, stressed the responsibility of women to ensure the emotional survival of the family. Gordon argues that during this period violence and conflict in the family was denied. Rather than being understood as an extension of "normal" conflict between men and women in a male-dominated society, marital stress was rendered invisible as an individual problem. Women anthropologists during this period, she maintains, projected idealized American gender roles onto Native American women—creating a sort of female noble savage. The result was a relationship of what Gordon calls "matronization."[6] As illustration, she offers an analysis of Gladys Reichard's biography of a Navaho woman entitled *Dezba: Woman of the Desert*, published in 1939, the year after Landes's *Ojibwa Woman*. Reichard represents Dezba as a defender and protector who responds to community needs, a model

of sacrificing maternalism, what Gordon calls a "communal mother." Dezba exhibits a dignity and quiet resistance but is also a projection and translation of proper Anglo-American female behaviour during this period.

This model of matronization, however, cannot be applied to Ruth Landes's relationship with Maggie Wilson nor to the ethnography that resulted from their work together. On the contrary, Landes has been criticized for having a "negative bias" toward the Ojibwa because she records instances of child and wife abuse, incest, rape and infanticide.[7] In the following section, I explore reasons for Ruth Landes's willingness to explore conflict and tension in aboriginal women's lives when other Boasian women anthropologists apparently were constructing their passive maternalism. I do this by reference to a third storytelling practice, the script for women in pre-World War II America and the tailoring of this script for immigrant daughters.

A Third Storytelling Practice: The Script for Immigrant Daughters in Pre-World War II America

In my view, Ruth Landes's ability to elicit and to hear Maggie Wilson's stories originated in her personal circumstances and in her own resistance to a third storytelling tradition. Effectively, Landes was unable to critique the Boasian paradigm of ungendered culture because through it—embodied in Benedict's approval of her Ph.D. dissertation—she was seeking self-validation and a prescription for her future in the profession of anthropology. At the same time, however, she was actively resisting the model of womanhood prescribed for her as the daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants. Born in 1908, Landes was raised in a household that was seeking to establish itself in America. Her father, Joseph Schlossberg, had emigrated from Russia to New York at the age of 13 and immediately had gone to work in the garment trade. He went on to become the co-founder of the Amalgamated Garment Workers' Union of America. Her mother, Anna Grossman, who had received a high school education before leaving the Ukraine, was an unhappily married woman who chose to live her life within the confines of the marriage, repressing both her sexuality and her ambitions and prescribing a similar fate for her daughter. Ruth grew up with the model of the overriding importance of family and the responsibility of women for the raising of children and the maintenance of tradition and security in the home.[8] However, coming of age in New York during the 1920s, the age of the so-called New Woman, Landes was attracted to the possibility of both a sexual and independent existence as a woman, and determined not to re-live her mother's life (cf. Todd 1993). Enjoying what appeared to be a happy premarital sexual relationship, Ruth had married Victor Landes in 1929 at the age of 21. Within two years she was separated from him, repelled by what she later described as the "confines of domesticity" in marriage and by her husband's refusal to accept her professional ambitions (Landes 1970).

Making this decision was one thing; living with the consequences was another. It is clear from letters and diaries that Landes was considered and considered herself to have failed in the eyes of her mother and of her cultural milieu, her ethnic and social class context. In deciding to enter graduate school in anthropology, Landes sought a new sense of self and a validation of self. Franz Boas's acceptance of female students was remarkable in its time and has never been replicated. Forty years later, in 1976, Landes wrote: "I recall the decade of my studies at Columbia University, when 'women's lib' was as yet uncoined but, under Boas, there was professorial acceptance of women as equally people. . . . it was heady for us and obnoxious to certain men. Its singularity still arrests the mind."

Landes sought professional validation through anthropology and in the approval of her teachers, Boas and Benedict. At the same time, she was well aware of the differences between herself and most of the other women at Columbia at the time. Landes was raised in Brooklyn, the daughter of working-class Russian Jewish immigrants. Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead and Gladys Reichard were, on the other hand, daughters of established Anglo-Protestant American families raised in Manhattan or Philadelphia or upstate New York. Ruth Landes's Jewish and immigrant origins did not go unnoticed among her women colleagues. In her journals Landes often remarks, for example, upon Margaret Mead's exclusionary practices and her "old American" snobbishness.[9]

In addition to her social class and ethnic marginality at Columbia, at a personal level there remained all the unresolved questions—from her mother's unhappiness and her own brief marriage—about what it means to be a woman, to be a sexual being, about what might be possible under different circumstances. She wrote later that, as a student entering anthropology, she had "wanted to know how different societies handled the same life situations of, for example, sexual desire and marriage, particular neuroses and psychoses, or formal recognitions of success and failure in careers. [I] wanted to compare them to see where particular cultures set up differing boundaries for acceptable conduct, and to see wherein all cultures behaved similarly, and to see how cultures changed" (Landes 1965:7).

Landes, then, had a purpose of her own separate from Benedict's goals for her Ojibwa research. She wanted to know more about sex and marriage, to know that, in rejecting marriage, she was not as aberrant as her mother made her out to be. Also, she wanted affirmations of women's success in male cultural domains. Landes's preoccupation with the topics of sex and marriage found resonance not in the Boasian paradigm of culture, but in Maggie's rendition of Ojibwa culture itself. Among the Ojibwa, Landes wrote:

> ... the general attitude in the community regarding love and sex [is that] [t]hese are considered very enjoyable, socially and sensually. The culture-hero myths contain a great number of incidents that express this taste, and often incidents are told by men in friendly small talk; the incidents are told broadly and humorously and sound as though inspired by the intercourse of cross-cousins [cross-cousins being the culturally favoured kin category of potential spouses; cross-cousins typically flirt or parody the flirting of sweethearts]. Other legendary and semi-historical tales, and even gossipy tales are concerned with sexual and romantic relations. Through the winter months older women often tell their life histories and devote a great amount of time and interest to elaborating their past affairs with lovers and husbands. (Landes 1938a:42)

Ruth Landes thus elicited stories that Maggie Wilson was culturally inclined to tell. The stories, based in women's lived experiences, tell of happiness and unhappiness in love and marriage. Some stories describe what Mrs. Wilson, a Christian, calls "funny marriages"—those originating in incestuous or polygamous relationships. Landes was especially interested in stories that described how marriages were established (through night visiting and "sleeping through the dawn") and how marriages were dissolved. In *The Ojibwa Woman*, Landes wrote that "Women often desert a husband when they have conceived a passion for another man" (Landes 1938a:97), and that "divorce [achieved by simple desertion] is nearly as common as marriage" (ibid.:85). "The people do not brand [a woman's] conduct as irresponsible, for marital responsibility is not recognized as the motivation of an adult's life. It is so thoroughly recognized that a person follows only his private inclinations ..." (ibid.:100). And, a statement that perhaps reflects Landes's own view of marriage: "Clearly, it [i.e., marriage] is a very limited social experience, especially for a monogamous couple. But every cultural effort has been made to charge it with excitement and beauty" (ibid.:123).

Such a portrait of pleasure, pain and emotions in love and marriage was not provided for in the Boasian paradigm where gender was untheorized, and where formulaic descriptions of the so-called sexual (read: "natural") division of labour silenced gender differences in experience and interpretation. The historical result has been that, although her ethnographic writing on Ojibwa religion was recognized, Landes's ethnography of gender has, for over half a century, remained outside the development of American anthropology—much as she maintained Ojibwa women lived "outside" Ojibwa culture and much as Landes herself, as the daughter of immigrants, lived outside of American history and society (and, thus, of the constructions of gender and ethnicity which Deborah Gordon's matronization model suggests).

Post-World War II Ojibwa ethnography instead sought to emphasize cooperation and communality in Ojibwa culture and followed more closely upon the work of Irving Hallowell than of Ruth Landes. For example, William Dunning, in his 1959 Canadian classic *Social and Economic Change among the*

Northern Ojibwa, describes marriage as a life-long co-operative economic partnership based on the sexual division of labour, and describes women as passive in sex. A woman is said to be servile to her husband who is described as "active and gregarious" (Dunning 1959:131). "The woman's role is one of submission" (ibid.:132). In Dunning's account, marriage choices follow prescribed cultural rules, not individual choice, and there is no mention of love, conflict, domestic violence, desertion, separation or divorce—the topics which most interested Maggie Wilson and Ruth Landes.

Conclusion: The Limits of Ethnography

My objective in this article has been to explore the position of Ruth Landes as an ethnographer of the Ojibwa in the 1930s, and to suggest that knowing more about Landes enables us to read her ethnography differently than it has been read to date. I have suggested that we read the tensions and apparent conflict and contradictions in Landes's Ojibwa ethnography as discordant voices of different storytelling practices. Such an interpretation enables us to see Landes in her historical context. That she developed an interpretive framework premised on individualism was in large part a result of the requirement of the professional anthropology of her day that cultures be integrated wholes and exhibit a cohesiveness. Sources of conflict and contesting internal (i.e., intracultural) interpretations could not be accommodated in such a paradigm. Landes was seeking a place among her professional colleagues and thus sought to produce a master narrative for Ojibwa culture. The irony is that the resulting ethnography lacks the very cohesiveness that Landes may have hoped to produce. Instead, Landes's Ojibwa ethnography offers contesting and often contradictory interpretations of events and behaviours. Landes's other "selves"—the immigrant daughter and estranged wife—moderate the authoritative ethnographic voice.

Thus, to answer the question posed earlier: why did Maggie Wilson tell Ruth Landes stories she had not told to the other ethnologists with whom she had worked? My response is: because Ruth Landes, an outsider in American society and in her own cultural and class milieu, was sensitized to "hear" them; and because Maggie Wilson, situated in a culture that prescribed storytelling for women, was a brilliant storyteller with a deep empathy for the fundamental conditions that delimit all women's lives—including the life of anthropologist Ruth Landes.

Notes

* An earlier version of this article was presented in the symposium "Women's Work in Canadian Anthropology," organized by the author at the 21st annual meeting of the Canadian Anthropology Society / Société canadienne d'anthropologie (CASCA), Vancouver, B.C., May 4-8, 1994. I would like to thank participants in the symposium for their comments, and Krystyna Starker and Ellen Jacobs for their many conversations with me during the writing of

this article, which is part of the work for a biography of Ruth Landes funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Faculty Research Development Program at Concordia University.

1. During the 1930s, Maggie Wilson wrote to Ruth Landes in New York; these letters were deposited with the Ruth Schlossberg Landes Papers (RSL) in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution upon Landes's death in 1991. The letters take the form of stories and begin "Dear Ruth, This is the story of...." The majority recount the lives of women known to Maggie Wilson; a few are mythical stories, and some bear a strong resemblance to European fairytales. According to Landes, Maggie and her daughter, Janet, would first discuss the story together in Ojibwa, and then Maggie would dictate to Janet a translated version in English. Maggie Wilson could speak, but not write, English. She then mailed the letters to Landes, c/o Ruth Benedict in New York, and was paid "$1.00 per fifteen pages one side" (Landes to Benedict, June 11, 1933, Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers). In addition to the unpublished correspondence, field notes and journals in the Landes Papers, this article is based upon correspondence between Ruth Landes and Ruth Benedict in the Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers (RFB) at Vassar College and on Benedict's letters, diaries and unpublished papers collected by Margaret Mead in *An Anthropologist at Work* (1959).
2. Although Mrs. Wilson was her main informant, Landes also worked with two male informants, Will Rogers (Hole-in-the-Sky), a Chippewa from Cass Lake, Minnesota, and, at Manitou, James Kavanaugh.
3. See Waisberg and Holzkamm (1993) for further discussion of the relocation of the Rainy River bands to Manitou Rapids.
4. This story was dictated by Maggie Wilson to her daughter Janet, and sent to Landes on 30 handwritten pages. It is catalogued as Story #74 in the Ruth Landes Papers. It is typical of the more than 100 stories Mrs. Wilson told Landes. Also typical is that Landes selected and published only excerpts from this story (see Landes 1938a:73;81-82;84;100). Other than making minor editorial and punctuation changes, I have reproduced it here as Mrs. Wilson had sent it to Landes. Correspondence between Ruth Landes and Ruth Benedict indicates that Benedict was reading the Wilson stories as they arrived at Columbia University and that it was Benedict who arranged for the money order payments to Mrs. Wilson for her work. Also of note is that Benedict's companion, Nathalie Raymond, was editing Landes's manuscript of *The Ojibwa Woman* while Landes was in the field in Kansas in 1935 with the Potawatomi. In this correspondence, for example, Benedict and Raymond advised Landes not to use Ojibwa names, but to "select short names and pronounceable ones" (RFB, February 4, 1935), and Landes wrote expressing her hope that Benedict "would come around to chapter four" (RFB, April 24, 1935). Given that Mrs. Wilson's stories are excerpted from and are not reproduced intact, the editorial roles that Benedict and Raymond played in determining the final form of *The Ojibwa Woman* warrants further investigation.
5. Maggie Wilson's storytelling resembles the practices of Yukon Athapaskan and Tlingit women's storytelling as described by Julie Cruikshank (1990). According to Cruikshank, Yukon women tell stories "to resurrect a sense of shared experience and community" (1990: 355) and their stories teach that "[w]omen who rely on learned, shared, 'practical' knowledge to achieve their ends eventually succeed" (1990:342-343).
6. See Joan Mark's biography of Alice Cunningham Fletcher whom she describes as "Mother to the Indians" (1988).
7. These comments were made during the discussion that followed my presentation of an earlier version of this article at the 1994 CASCA conference in Vancouver. The assertion that Maggie's stories were "only gossip" was also made as it often is when gender is the ethnographic topic under discussion.
8. Women's storytelling among Eastern European Jewry is often referred to as *bobbe-meyseh* (literally "grandmothers' stories") which, according to Marc Kaminsky, is "a pejorative term in

Yiddish denoting the exaggerated and unenlightened lore of unlettered old wives" (1992:46). Although I do not pursue such an analysis here, it is probable that Ruth Landes was taught the script of wife and mother not only indirectly in the example of the lives of her mother and aunts, but directly in the re-telling by them and others in her milieu of the tales and proverbs of *bobbe-meyseh*. Even in families on the Jewish left there was an absence of stories of women whose lives did not conform to roles based on women's domestic and reproductive work. For an excellent article that explores the contradiction between the lived historical roles played by women and their absence in the written and oral history of Eastern European Jewry, see Irena Klepfisz (1994), "Di Mames, dos Loshn / The Mothers, The Language: Feminism, Yidishkayt, and the Politics of Memory." I would like to thank Krystyna Starker for directing me to this article, and for suggesting the role that *bobbe-meyseh* undoubtedly played in Landes's early life.

9. Anti-Semitism at Columbia and more widely in North American universities is well known (see Darnell 1990; Jacoby 1983; Torgovnick 1994; Trilling 1979). Clearly, not all of Boas's students were of old American families. Zora Neale Hurston, for example, was an African American southerner and Ella Deloria a Dakota Sioux. There were others—mainly men—who, like Boas, were German Jews (Melville Herskovits, Edward Sapir, Gene Weltfish, Jules Henry, Walter Lipkind and Alexander Goldenweiser, to name a few). There were strong class and cultural differences, however, between German Jews and Russian Jews (like Ruth Schlossberg Landes) in America.

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"*SILIKA*—TO MAKE OUR LIVES SHINE": WOMEN'S GROUPS IN MARAGOLI, KENYA[1]

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Dedicated to the memory of Kagonga; may her songs live on.

Abstract: African women's development groups are frequently promoted as self-help efforts to overcome economic crises and persistent poverty. Indeed, government or other directed self-help enterprises will often respond to women's difficult financial circumstances only through organized women's groups as in, for example, the Women in Development projects in Kenya, East Africa. There is a strong assumption locally, nationally and globally that women's groups ought to be profitable organizations; the influence of capitalist assumptions is profound. In Kenya, for example, the necessary fee for a license to inaugurate a women's group sets up expectations of future profits—"it takes money to make money." In the rural area of Maragoli, Kenya, there are over 200 government-licensed Women Groups as well as other women's groups operating without licenses. Many are unsuccessful if measured in terms of economic accumulation. The publicity on both local and national levels surrounding their economic ineffectiveness undervalues women's contribution in these groups, permitting men and government officials to denigrate the benefits of women's solidarity.

Résumé: On présente souvent les groupes d'émancipation des femmes africaines comme étant le résultat d'efforts d'entraide pour combattre les crises économiques et la pauvreté tenace. En effet, les entreprises gouvernementales et autres organisations d'entraide vont subvenir aux besoins financiers des femmes par le biais de groupe organisés féminins tels les projets «Femmes en voie de développement» au Kenya, en Afrique orientale. Aux niveaux locaux, nationaux et globaux on présume que les groupes de femmes doivent être des organisations lucratives. L'influence des idées capitalistes est profondément enracinée. Au Kenya, par exemple, on justifie le coût de l'inscription en disant—il faut de l'argent pour gagner de l'argent. Dans la région de Maragoli au Kenya, il existe plus de

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200 groupes de femmes affiliés au gouvernement ainsi que d'autres groupes non affiliés. Bon nombre sont infructueux en terme d'accumulation économique. La publicité au niveau local et national, en ce qui concerne leur manque d'efficacité mine la contribution des femmes dans ces groupes permettant aux hommes et aux agents gouvernementaux de dénigrer les bénéfices de la solidarité féminine.

Introduction

For more than 20 years theoretical and empirical scholarship on women's place in African societies has forced acknowledgment of the relationship between economic and development issues and women's diverse roles and statuses. Models in current usage developed from three fundamental criticisms of the earlier literature. The first criticizes the optimism concerning economic progress of women through modernization, or the imposition of a capitalistic economic system. The second re-evaluates the role of women, given the continued strength of patriarchal ideology which has actually expanded through changing economic practices and deliberate state policies. The third critique examines women's deployment of decision-making power in economic, social and political contexts in the light of gender and class inequalities. Today's literature speaks about women's continuing hard work within changing systems of production and their contribution to local and national economics and to development. It uses case studies to examine women's responses to economic restructuring (i.e., under structural adjustment policies) and to locate their strategies for empowerment (cf. Blumbert et al. 1994). This paper is a contribution to that literature.

African women's efforts in women's groups are portrayed locally, nationally and globally as a viable means for economic improvement. Researchers have recognized that Africa has a particularly rich heritage of women cooperating with women in secret societies, revolutionary groups,[2] official women's organizations that may be associated with a ruling party, employment and trade union organizations, voluntary associations, modern cooperatives,[3] rural work groups and urban and rural groups mobilized for development purposes (cf. Chazan et al. 1992; Gordon and Gordon 1992; Staunton 1991; Stamp 1986, 1990; Nzomo 1989; March and Taqqu 1986; Riria-Ouko 1985; Wipper 1975, 1975-76, 1984). As a result, governments and other sources of help, when they respond at all to circumstances, often do so only through organized women's groups, e.g., the Women in Development (WID) and Maendeleo ya Wanawake (in Kiswahili meaning "progress for women") groups in Kenya (cf. Stamp 1990; Moi 1986), legitimizing inaction on other fronts.

Women's solidarity in Kenya was traditionally characterized by the utilization of age-set ceremonial for material and social support. These practices

have been succeeded by more economically focussed efforts. During the Emergency period, 1952 to 1960, most indigenous forms of organization were driven underground. Nonetheless, from the early 1950s and on into Independence, Kenya's Maendeleo ya Wanawake groups remained and became a *harambee*[4] effort. Women united to improve women's social, economic and political status, to wage war against illiteracy and ignorance, poor health, poverty and joblessness and to call for government assistance to women's groups for technical, financial and other necessities for progress. Certainly no mean feat! In 1977, at the foundation-stone-laying ceremony for the Maendeleo ya Wanawake building in Nairobi, hopes were high. The structure to come would accommodate national offices and provide space for vocational training programs for women and girls. It would also enable organizers to rent offices to raise income to finance educational welfare activities, extending these services to the rural districts. Symbolically, the very presence of a woman's monolith would "uplift the standards of living of the women of Kenya" (Kiano, October 17, 1977).[5] By 1987, Maendeleo ya Wanawake and Licensed Women Groups were taken under the KANU (Kenya African National Union) government umbrella via the Women's Bureau, Ministry of Social Services, so that "the women of Kenya maintain their faith in, hope and loyalty for, and cooperation with the Government, while raising their *Harambee* self-help spirits and achievements to new heights" (Moi 1986:110). Maendeleo ya Wanawake groups were subsumed by *nyayo*,[6] the Women's Decade focus on peace, equality and progress to be "married" to the *nyayo* principles of peace, love, unity and sharing (ibid.:117). This political rhetoric is not matched by any financial support. Indeed, government grants have consistently declined; currently they represent less than one half of 1 percent of government expenditure. Undeniably Maendeleo ya Wanawake organizations throughout Kenya achieved much through their efforts, with minimal financial help from the government. Nonetheless, as Stamp says, "[Kenyan] women become targets of development policy, problematic targets, where self-reliance is seen to be introduced from above and permits the paradox at the heart of the movement in Kenya to prod rural women into self-help groups" (Stamp 1990:152). During field work in 1992 and 1994, the Maendeleo Building was relatively empty; the rooms set aside for the Maendeleo ya Wanawake organization held a few desks and chairs, piled one on top of the other. A few books and pamphlets were laid out. A part-time secretary told how the Executive Director attended the office once or twice a week and that an appointment was necessary to ensure her arrival.

The major difficulty is economic; without seed or start-up funds, the organization and the Women Groups within the organization simply stagnate. Credit for start-up funds remains a severe problem. Interest rates range from 35 to 40 percent annually; private moneylenders may charge up to 240 percent. None-

theless, Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme (K-REP) is a pioneering non-governmental credit organization which provides groups with advice and loans. Recently, K-REP has targeted individual entrepreneurial activity, with the hope that these individuals will create jobs for others through small-scale businesses. Women entrepreneurs have achieved an amazing 100 percent repayment rate in this group credit scheme (African Farmer 1994:8).

Women's Groups operate in a capitalist environment under a "women in development" model which emphasizes economics. In Maragoli, as in the rest of Kenya, development means progress and progress takes cash. The social, political and familial aspects of women's lives are subordinated to a desire for profit and accumulation in WID constructs and in many analytical approaches (see Stamp 1986 and 1990 for a refreshing divergent approach). Of course, one must avoid emphasizing the political and the social at the expense of women's economic contribution. To do so in an African context would permit women's integral economic contribution to be labelled "marginal" or "petty." Elson, for example, criticizes the extension of self-help strategies to collective organizations, warning that they appear to be "women helping one another to meet their practical gender needs. They [self-help strategies] formalize the informal female support networks that women everywhere construct, but they perpetuate the idea that unpaid labor for the benefit of others is 'women's work' and they construct women's role in community organizing as an extension of their domestic role" (Elson 1992:40-41). Her points are well taken. In the rural area of this case analysis, women's "practical gender needs" encompass the human needs of the entire community. Today, however, there is an additional expectation (a major point in this paper) that women's collective organizations will also provide needed cash in an area where women's (and men's) opportunities for paid labour are scarce.

In Maragoli, Kenya, Logoli women[7] draw on a traditional sentiment of solidarity, *silika*, and in today's society gather in "Women Groups" in an effort to realize both economic and social support. The interaction of women in groups is vital for community survival and development. Such interactions, sometimes in the guise of *harambee* or *nyayo* efforts, include raising money through singing in choirs or by digging land, selling food and crafts, building schools or churches or cleaning water resource areas. Women gather to provide these services and have an acknowledged social power to influence communal action in aspects of development. In the words of one Assistant Chief: "You cannot have community development without women" (Gideon, March 25, 1988). On the other hand, in 1987, when I sought permission to investigate Women Groups in Maragoli, a District Officer in the area cynically informed me that there are no Women Groups in Maragoli. When I alluded to the number of licensed groups, he replied that they do not exist as they do not make money.

There are over 200 government-licensed Women Groups in Maragoli, an area of approximately 200 000 people, as well as numerous unlicensed groups. Many, however, are inactive and most are unsuccessful if measured in terms of economic accumulation. The publicity on both local and national levels surrounding their economic ineffectiveness underestimates Logoli women's contribution in these groups, permitting Logoli men and government officials to denigrate the productive benefits of women's solidarity. This article examines some of these Maragoli Women Groups, both government licensed and unlicensed, in order to provide a more balanced portrait.

Eichler and Lapointe (1985:12) promote special studies of women, examining "issues from a female perspective." Citing Marsden (1981), these authors say that using a female perspective in economics considers "the value for the economy as a whole of the unpaid work performed primarily by women" (1985:20). Stamp draws on Foucault's (1980) use of "the little question, what is it" to say, "The task of Western scholars [and aid agents] is to take local knowledges seriously: to rescue them from the 'margins of knowledge' and to incorporate them into a scientific understanding of African society" (Stamp 1990:133). This article incorporates both suggestions by focussing on Logoli women's narratives, providing women-centred discourses that allow Logoli women's own interpretations of women's solidarity. On occasion, men's narratives are also included. In "Conversations between Cultures: Outrageous Voices?" (Abwunza 1995), I call for a conversation between cultures in which local voices may be heard. This article is an exercise toward the fulfillment of that goal.

Avalogoli

The Avalogoli are a fairly typical Kenyan ethnic group relying on both subsistence production and wage and casual labour. They live in Maragoli, Western Province. The Avalogoli are a subgroup in the larger cultural and linguistic Bantu group of Abaluhya. Like many of their Abaluhya neighbours Logoli people are cattle-keeping agriculturalists with a societal structure of segmentary patrilineages which to a great extent still legitimizes life ways. They are patrilocal and polygynous. Gender relations are also conditioned by bridewealth and by a patriarchal ideology. Avalogoli retain a sense of collective action that approximates a "kin corporate mode of production" (Sacks 1979: 122). This idealized collective articulates with capitalism, affecting the allocation of products, through, for example, reciprocal obligations and benefits in kin, affine and friendship networks (Abwunza 1990, 1991, 1993).

Economic hardship is common in Maragoli. Agricultural land for personal subsistence is expensive and scarce. Cash cropping is small scale, catering mostly to local markets. Population densities average 825 people per square kilometre. Most people farm on one quarter to one half an acre of land. The

annual rate of population increase, although currently declining (Bradley 1989, 1991), still hovers close to 4 percent (Government of Kenya, October 2, 1982). Wage-labour positions are scarce and there is no suggestion of improvement. It is mainly women who farm and maintain social networks, as men work or look for work in the wage-labour sector, usually outside the area. Recently, this situation has been further complicated by an externally imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which affects African women producers more than any other segment of the population (see Gladwin 1993; Brown and Tiffen 1992; Elson 1992). The shift from project-oriented funds to conditional funds on the part of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and bilateral donors has placed tremendous burdens both on urban Africans and on the rural populations that such schemes propose to assist. In brief, structural adjustment reforms are conditioned by devaluation of currencies, increases in formerly low food prices and interest rates, alignment of domestic prices with world prices, an emphasis on tradable rather than subsistence crops, privatization of parastatals, reductions in public-sector employment and wages, decreases in budget deficits and elimination of food and fertilizer subsidies (Economic Commission for Africa 1989:18-20). These prescriptions are all based on the neoclassical economic assumption that markets are good and that they work. Any "positive sides" of SAP are often lost in the poverty of real life.

Advocates of SAP seek to promote efficient, reliable and honest public service, the divestiture of non-strategic public enterprises, the elimination of one-party states, increased exports, enhanced entrepreneurial behaviour and decreased budget deficits. A couple of examples of the effects of SAP are sufficient. Improving the balance of trade creates a situation where governments are forced to cut spending and imports while promoting exports. This along with the devaluation of an overvalued currency increases the cost of imported goods. The assumption is that this should in turn increase agricultural producer prices at home. Farmers are imagined to use few imports, thus their earnings are assumed to increase more than their costs. This should stimulate local agricultural production and promote exports. Farmers would benefit while urban consumers would lose, but the whole economy would be jump-started, and in the end, so the story goes, everyone would gain.[8] In some contexts, however, the SAP approach ignores power relations. Urban élites have more influence over budget-cutting decisions than rural farmers. Women producers, moreover, neither own land nor have direct financial access to such inputs of production as credit, fertilizer and seed. Women do not receive the income from cash or export crops that increase their labour and interfere with their food-growing activities for the family and community. High agricultural producer prices hurt women subsistence farmers, particularly in an area such as Maragoli, where households are not self-sufficient in food production and

women are largely responsible for family food provisioning and community maintenance (Abwunza 1990, 1991).[9] Prices for seed, fertilizer, transportation and food increase markedly. Recently, a Logoli woman said, "In Kenya, 100 KShs. is now worth 37 KShs" (Victoria, December 1993).

Difficult local circumstances and imposed SAP policies cause skyrocketing costs for food and other necessary market commodities, spinning off into increased costs for education and health care.[10] In the face of all this, Avalogoli encounter economic risk. Much of the burden devolves on Logoli women who are active economic providers for their families and the community. A forced decline in living standards also drastically affects the customary and expected networks Logoli women are so dependent upon (cf. Abwunza 1990, 1991).

It is in this context that Logoli women say they engage in solidarity efforts to make "our lives shine." "Shining" is not only evidenced by an accumulation of much-needed cash but also by food, a blanket, a lantern, utensils, a day or two days' work for one another. Women borrow, lend and provide support in times of need, whether need is occasioned by unexpected guests or by a death. Logoli women say the limited contributions of most men do not allow women's "lives to shine."

Silika

> We called it . . . *yea*, we called it *silika. Asande muno* [Thank you]. Thank you for reminding me. (Feabe, October 1, 1987)

Feabe is a respected elder, a community leader, "one who leads groups and gives advice." She estimates her age as late 70s or early 80s but says, "How do I know, how do I know the years?"

> *Feabe.*[11] Thank you very much for asking me a question which reminds me that during those days there used to be a co-operation without money. Dig here one day, then go to my place and dig another day. All that each house had to do was give food for them to eat. But that used to be here. Where the goodness was in those older days was this. Women were helping each other, leaving one household to the next and what they were happy with was food, they would get a bunch of bananas, no maize then, millet was here, and they would eat plenty and they would go to the next yard. Or we told the old stories, we sang and danced, we helped each other. I was a leader of young women. Today I am a leader of all women in the village, giving advice. People are happy with my advice. I am old, I wanted to stop doing leaderships, but women asked me to continue. I was always a singer, even today I sing. Nowadays, it is quite different. Each family thinks about their own household. There are those who have money and will progress. They only concern for themselves. They look at those who are poor and they do nothing. Their own progress is how they think, not about the *inyumba* [house, referring to lineage].

Salome Kagonga was very old in 1987, approximately 103, quite deaf and suffering, as she said, from "elderly disease and stomach ache." She died in January 1989.

> *Salome K.*[12] And we sang. We young girls went to our house [traditional girls' house] and we sang the songs of the ancients. We used to plant vegetables and then they dried. And then an old lady would die, the vegetables would feed the people [at the funeral]. We said we will go sing for that one. Then we go to the grave, we picked up those dried shards, we didn't know that someone came from heaven. This is how we and the elderly women [grown-up and married] used to sing. The men sang too, but not with us. I did not know their songs. Or a woman would be sick or give birth, we would care for and feed. We made houses. We made rope, get shrubs and some trees, and tie ropes around. Then on top make the roof and that would be the house. Not mud houses, not then. That was in the land of my father and grandfather. We girls had incisions around the belly and then the teeth were removed. We went together. You lined up and you knelt and that was done. There were young men who were laughing at you, to see if you were frightened, so you dare not get frightened. We had no clothes, none at all. We were just walking around naked. A man could not touch those incisions, would never embrace, without giving a white chicken. If you did not do that every girl the same age laughed at you and was mean. When the teeth were removed you went to where your mother came from and her brother gave you a chicken. We girls all went together. When God came, we left this, people could not speak the English without the teeth. We left the incisions too. Then I came here [married] to Mahagira's [grandson of the ancestor Mulogoli] land. I came with my grinding stone which my mother and father got for me. We women met and stayed together, at the back door, the kitchen was there. We helped one another. When there was a wedding we cooked bananas. And then the little girls who were born did as we did when we were young and when we grew. Men stayed at the front, they made decisions there. But the person who dug and stayed with children made the decisions about that. So I made the decisions about that. Now men go uplands and work there and we women stay and work. Men believe they are the commander (*omwene hango*) but if women do not take care of the entire house and yard who is going to do it? And we women work together to do that. My daughter-in-law [referring to me][13] that is finished, the rest of it has to rest. Now you tell about you. Yes! In those old days it was called *silika*. I remember that.

The form of traditional *silika* relied on elders teaching the young, mothers instructing daughters. Women's solidarity began early in a young girl's life, listening to grandmothers around the fire at the girl's hut, preparing to engage in the age-grade rituals that permitted access to womanhood and marriage. After marriage, women retained solidarity and reciprocal relations with their natal relatives through visiting, as bridewealth was exchanged and children were born; *avana ni daraja yo kololenana* (children are the bridge for visiting). They formed new alliances with other wives where they married and women affines who were maried elsewhere. The network of "back door" sup-

port, women supporting women, expanded (and still expands) to enormous proportions. Women were (and still are) organizers and decision makers. The function of *silika* was to provide assistance in work groups but also to provide social support among women, in marriage, birth, sickness and death. And through it all they "enjoyed," by singing and dancing.

The importance of solidarity, women supporting women, is indispensable in a society where women have a history of productive results from uniting, as they say, "*kuvumba ha chandangu*" (gathering at the back door). In Maragoli, patriarchal sentiment promotes the right of men to make decisions and the obligation of women to obey. However, house architecture, the physical form of the domestic arena, presents an alternative and more equal structure for relationships. Front doors of houses belong to men, back doors to women. Wherever women gather and whatever women do is considered the *chandangu* (back door). Acceptance of *vivuni vye chandangu* (back-door decisions), the power constituted through the back door, implies the power of women. Men who accept the decisions of women may be seen to be listening too much to women's opinions, or even taking direction from them, "listening to the back door." In this criticism lies an implicit recognition that there is power at the back door. The ideological and institutional conditions affecting women's activities in cultural contexts reveal that women gain influence that enables them to act with power in spheres of life that expand the "back door" beyond its immediate threshold. Current involvement in women's group solidarity is a sphere that expands the "back door."

Maragoli Women Groups

> *Maendeleo* [development] has a lot of steps, many steps. One of them is to be able to have a number of cattle and chickens and it also means a different way of digging your land. If the harvest is good, from maize, bananas, you can sell. We try to do this alone and with women groups. It is money that makes you think and plan and change your life. (Finase A., October 20, 1987)

The form and function of contemporary women's solidarity are quite different from the traditional *silika*. In form, some groups are headed by respected community women, as presidents or chairladies, vice-presidents, secretaries and treasurers and are licensed by the government of Kenya. Licensed groups have bank accounts to house dues and money raised from work or *harambee* efforts. A bank account is necessary proof of accumulation, in case the government arm supervising women's groups provides the hoped-for economic support. A few women's groups have received some assistance and raised the expectations of all. Bank accounts have two or more members as signing authorities in an effort to control the narrow line between self-help and help-self. Some groups are quite large, with over 100 members. Some are small, with 20 or 25 members. A function of women's solidarity today is individual cash

accumulation. Women's group members work diligently to achieve economic success. Unfortunately the economic results are often unreliable.

Gender attitudes intrude. Many Logoli men denigrate the benefits of women's solidarity, labelling such groups non-productive. They reduce women's group activity to gatherings within which women gossip about men, and they attempt to discourage women from joining. In response to women gathering in Women Groups, they say, "Women should stay in their own yards. Women who run to other yards make trouble in their own" (Bowers, January 16, 1988). Group activities are labelled economically ineffective as a way of saying that they take women away from what men consider more productive activity in their own yard. Many women, however, ignore the threat and remain group members.

Today's government-licensed Women's Groups are organized to assist with women's development. An important element of fidelity to *silika* resides in the ideology of women supporting women, for their own benefit and that of the entire community. Although active Women Groups are not always economically prosperous, they are always constructive. Women gathering in groups share information, for example, details about government directives in old and new laws, or the current wages for digging and the prices of commodities. Confronting the difficult aspects of subsistence, they discuss agricultural assistance and innovations and mourn the loss of kinship support. Combatting illness, they pass on information about hygiene and health care. Together they learn crafts and even how to survive and act in difficult marriage relationships.

> *Edelia.*[14] Before women were seen as weaklings, controlled, but government emphasis is on women and *Maendeleo*, the women have become productive. The President has announced this and also that the young should help their parents, some do—some do not.
>
> *Finasi B.*[15] *Maendeleo* is progress. Progress means being able to have something to eat at home and send to the market, but all we have is what we eat. Sometimes this is not enough. You only have a quarter of an acre and you plant. If the group [Women Group] could get money to buy a plot, we could assist, we could all benefit from what is sold. We cannot buy land from these small dues [membership dues], there is no one to pay us to dig and the government has not given [money].

A half dozen or so women are employed by the government to assist with Women's Groups. Sarar Amadadi is a Location Women Leader. She describes her duties as primarily centred in community development, self-help projects and social welfare matters such as hunger, wife abuse and assistance for the disabled. She also assists by educating women in child care, nutrition and hygiene. Sarar believes the best way to give assistance is through material goods, for example, building material, cloth or wool. Cash, she believes, is easily misused. All Women Groups, or Community Development groups, must assist the

community rather than individuals if the groups want government support. Government regulations also say the group must have more than 25 members, pay 150 Kshs. for a licence (certificate) and submit a monthly report to the Location Leader. In 1987, only seven groups were provided with material assistance; in 1988, four; in 1992, two; and in 1994 there was no record of any groups receiving such assistance.

> *Sarar.*[16] The biggest problem is money. There is no money coming from the government, members are poor and there is little help for them. So we suggest traditional ways of raising money, that is group efforts, but it's not successful. Sometimes leaders misuse, or do not account to members, where money is going. The reports of this do come in, we get them, but how do we approach people like that [with high status in the community]. Still these self-help programs are the only way to help the people.

An Assistant Chief agrees with the importance of self-help groups.

> *Gideon.*[17] We must have self-help groups. So that members can dig, and invest money in digging, plant vegetables, plant trees, because there is not work for young people and some must learn the art of brick making or building and sell to help themselves. This is to help people in the process of *maendeleo*, this is how we can get ahead. People can also get their livelihood from such projects. To say that I shall go to school and get a job is easy in thought, but even Form 6 graduates are idle. They have no work. There is no work in Kenya for them. They are just at home.

Florence Vosolo, whose title is Community Development Assistant, has Form 4 and one year of training in nutrition, community development, community and group work, agriculture, child development and civics. Florence's area covers 18 sublocations, serving 74 Women Groups. Women Location Leader Beatrice Iganza has Form 4 and one year's training at Kenyatta Training Institution. Beatrice trained to be a nursery teacher or nursery supervisor but uses her training in nutrition, home management and day-care centre management to assist with women's groups. Her area covers nine sublocations and serves 39 Women Groups. These women spend two days a week in their office at Mbale Market in Maragoli and three in the field visiting Women Groups. Despite the requirement to travel and the distances involved, these positions are not supported with a travel allowance. The women "foot it" or take *matatus* (buses or taxis), which they pay for themselves. Florence and Beatrice discuss the problems they believe Women Groups face.

> *Florence and Beatrice.*[18] The goods Women Group members try to sell are not marketable. Knitting, vegetables, handicrafts, they are making things everyone makes, so no one buys. Leadership is always a problem, who should lead the groups. Often one person has all the power, becomes everything, and sometimes leaders take the funds for themselves. Women Groups are ignored by the admin-

istration, especially some Assistant Chiefs. The Chiefs do not let their wives join to give an example to other women. Men generally say, "why should women waste their time going to groups." Some of the men and some of the elder women call women who join groups prostitutes. We hand in monthly, quarterly and annual reports which only get filed. No one reads them or provides any assistance.

The Women Group at Vigeze Village, with 40 regular members, bought a building plot in 1984 through a hire-purchase agreement. They are gradually constructing a cement-block building which they hope to rent for income. Each member donates a bit of her own plot and they rent land on which to grow and sell cash crops. They dig for others, when others can afford to hire them, and they pay dues if they can afford them. They also make and sell pottery, water pots, flower pots and cooking pots, to pay off the land and finance the construction of the building. After they registered as a Women Group, Kenyan Social Services sent them 58 bags of cement. They have approached many people for financial assistance, the Assistant Chief of the area, for example, as well as the "Women's Representative from the Government." In the past they have written this women's leader many times but she says there is no assistance for them. Once, through the Kenya Volunteer Development Association, people in Denmark sent a group of young men and women to assist them with gathering stones for the building's foundation. They were also given a sewing machine from people in Sweden.

Vigeze Village Women Group Members.[19] Having a group assists us, we can work together for food, for clothing. A group must trust in one another. We have three people who must sign the cheques. Having the sewing machine is good, but it was difficult to get. One woman travelled to Nairobi to carry it back. It took from Sunday to Wednesday in Nairobi for her to receive it. [The woman slept on the floor at the airport.] The duty on the machine was very high. We have to depend on ourselves. We counsel one another.

Lugaga Women Group formed in January 1977 and "since then we have never faltered."

Lugaga Women Group Members.[20] We were fifteen ladies who sat and began to plan the lives, to know how these ladies can help themselves in their own homes. We sewed tablecloths, sweaters, made pottery and began to dig and plant vegetables for sale. We decided making tablecloths was not a good idea, no one would buy. Then we made pottery and crafts with materials that are free [banana fibre], making baskets, trays, bags and place mats. We can make so many, but few sell. But sitting idle is not the way for us. We now are 52 members. When we get money we buy food to sell. In different villages, 20 in one village selling maize, 22 in another village selling fish, in another village 10 sell beans. We have a building but the plot is not ours. We have a nursery school in that building. We had *harambees* to build that building. In 1981, the government gave us 7000 Kshs. and we used that money to plaster the building and

some to invest in the business of selling food. We buy maize for 5 Shs. and sell for 5.50 Shs.[21] The same for fish, we add a bit, the same with beans. Choir is one of our activities, in November 1987, we travelled to Nairobi and sang for the radio. We sang about family planning. We sat down and thought, the best way to teach is to sing. "We are the women from Lugaga—a good example for Kenya of family planning. Plan the family—don't have too many children. This will improve your life and your family's life. We will have happiness and a decent country. Listen to our plan of bearing children. Follow *Nyayo* for bringing family planning. Go to the hospital. You cannot bear children like tomatoes. There is no progress without family planning." We do not have conflicts, if we did, we would not remain together. We will continue to work and save for our own plot.

A member of the Nadanya Self Help Group says that originally their group was a Women Group.[22] It began as a choir group in 1983. However, many of the husbands "disagreed" with women's membership, so in 1986 they opened the membership to men and registered as a self-help group. Of the 42 members, 12 are men. Group members make pottery, sew tablecloths and knit. They rent land to grow vegetables for sale. They want to "further develop" by purchasing a plot and building on it. They would like to have a carpentry shop to build furniture. But they are unable to sell much of their production. In December 1986, they sang for President Moi, and he presented them with 10 000 Kshs. In 1987, they sang as they escorted the visiting Member of Parliament. He gave them 5000 Kshs. They used some money to give each member 30 Kshs., some to support community churches and they used some more to entertain guests. The remainder was used to purchase uniforms, believing that they could earn money through their choir activities. Financially, the group is floundering, but socially they remain together, lending their labour to the community by helping to build churches.

The Chambaya Women Group was established in 1984 and has 20 members. The Chairlady and Vice-Chairlady maintain that they were required to pay 800 Kshs. to register their group. They have received no assistance from the government.

Chambaya Women Group Members.[23] We have approached the Women Group Leader a number of times, she does not help. She says the government will help but they don't. We pay dues, 25 Shs. every month on the 5th, the day we meet. We rent a plot to grow beans and maize to sell. We bought a building plot, we paid 5000 Kshs. and the man is hounding for the remainder, but we have prayed with him to wait. We thought it was easy [to raise money] but it is not. We want to construct a flour mill, but it is very costly.[24] In Maragoli, if your group is too large you end up with conflict. There is a lack of trust with money. We will do well if we are small and trust one another. The Woman Leader needs *chai* [tea, euphemism for a bribe], she's hungry. Life has problems, you try and solve them. If you have 10 Shs. you give her five, you remain with five and perhaps you get help.

The Mmadanga Women Group is large, about 100 members from surrounding sublocations. They are licensed by the government, make a one-time payment of 30 Kshs. dues and engage in agriculture and knitting to raise money. The founders of this group are men. The group was given money by the government to buy a plot on the tarmacked Kisumu/Kakamega road, a prime location.

> *Mmadanga Women Group Members.*[25] We are trying to convince the government to give us 200 000 to 400 000 Kshs. to build a single-family, income-generating home on the land. For this, we will receive 1000 Kshs. a month rental. What can we do? We need someone to give us money. We need partners from overseas.

The Mmadanga Group is criticized by other groups as "Those who sit on gold and wait for gifts."

The Digoi Women Group initially began in 1980 when five people met together and formed a group. They decided to contribute 2 Kshs. a month, but after three months they raised this to 7 Kshs. They were licensed in 1981; the fee was 200 Kshs. They dug to raise money—"we all love digging"—charging very low rates. The oldest member of the group, Diriya, decided to join because she was afraid of being alone and weak. "Now with these children [group] I am not lonely and I get strength from these children. When they talk I am part of them and them of me. I get hope from that" (February 11, 1988).

> *Digoi Women Group Members.*[26] We were just helping people. We charged so little to dig, but when you are together you help each other. Now we have 35 members and four are men. Once we had 40, others saw us meeting and came one by one, two by two to join. At the beginning we made 800 Kshs. and we added 500 to open a bank account. Now we do membership digging only, and we ask members to give part of their plot to the group. We grow maize, peas, beans and cabbages to sell. We sell to everyone, but members get it a bit cheaper. If we have a good harvest, we also buy to sell more. KENGO [a corporation] gave us 5000 Kshs. in 1982. We will buy a plot and build a building for our transactions. The Horticultural Department gave us seeds and fertilizer. It is difficult, many people sell [crops]. The plot and building will be so expensive. We formed a group so that we could help one another. Belonging to a group is worthwhile. We assist when death comes or a baby is born. We loan money to our members, they pay 10 percent interest. Two members have not returned the money. They paid a bit, since then nothing. So now we are careful who we trust. We also give food to those who are without.

Asega is a former school teacher. He discusses the difficulties he sees in women's development groups. "Women do not have anyone to lead them. The women leaders do not have any more knowledge than the people they are leading. They need someone from outside the area who has knowledge, an expert. The women will follow his[27] example. He will mobilize and instruct them.

Our women will work if they have someone to teach them and mobilize them. The Assistant Chiefs must see that this is done" (November 22, 1987).

Benson is an unemployed carpenter. He says, "Women groups always want money. Women take money from home to give there. Then they want women to work for them. We see nothing from all that at home. If you tell me to move from here to there and I can be told how that will help me I will move. If there is no help for me why should I move [allow his wife to join]?" (December 22, 1987). The comments of these two men fly in the face of women's actual experience.

Other women in Maragoli gather in small, unlicensed groups, often without the knowledge of men. These women are involved in rotating work, or contributing cash or goods on a rotating basis.

Joyce.[28] I work with two other women, we dig, plant, weed and harvest together. This has been going on for some years. We work two days at one place and move on to one of the others. The person whose home is dug supplies and cooks the food. Three others have asked to join us, but we have refused them entry. It's better to remain small and work with people you can trust. My husband does not know we work together. Husbands do not approve of women being together, they want wives to stay in their yards. He asks me, "Who did this building or digging for you?" I say, "I did this myself."

Jerida.[29] Life is difficult but I persevere and we women assist one another, my co-wives [sisters-in-law] and the groups [Women Groups]. We [Women Group] do not belong to the government, that way is too expensive and you receive nothing. Even if the government gives, the leaders keep, the groups get nothing and the leaders expect the groups to pay them tea [bribe].

Gladys.[30] We are four in our group. We are just beginning. We meet and discuss. We knit and embroider for sale. We do not save yet, we sell to get sugar, tea and vegetables for home. It is not good to try and grow food to sell. There is not land and who can tell about the climate. We want to begin a business that sells clothes [second-hand]. The big problem with Women Groups is that people stand for one another, they do not help others. They cannot trust one another. They steal from one another. Some do more work than others and want more. The old women corrupt the group.

Salome M.[31] Our group is small [18 members] but we work hard. We pay dues, 18 Kshs. a month. Sometimes we dig to raise money. Sometimes we cook food and sell it on the market. We loan our members money and we pay back with 15 percent interest. You see, I bought these utensils from one who was leaving. I borrowed the money to pay from my group.

Florah.[32] We are 15 members in our Women Group. We are not part of the government. We pay dues, 15 Kshs. a month and we work with one another and for others during planting, digging and harvesting. We all give a piece of our land for crops to sell for the group funds. We do not tell our husbands we do this. They would not want the land to be used for a women group. If we are able we

buy fertilizer or seed, or rent oxen to plough. Sometimes we cannot afford, so we go in the group and hoe. Our purpose is to uplift our members. If one experiences a death in the family, we do not visit bare-handed, we take sugar, milk, tea leaves, flour or maize. We look into our welfare by keeping company and we help in disagreements in marriage. If our daughter has a child, we go there to know the home, to see the mother-in-law and the newborn. We take chickens, maize flour and some money in an envelope, this is to uplift the mother [group member] and the daughter, so the daughter does not look poor. If visitors come to one member's yard, the group is invited to help serve them, fetch water and firewood. We are close, we are aware what a member is missing. We meet and decide who will contribute what and it is carried to the member that month. We meet and decide who is the next member to visit. The person who is to be visited is told the month before. The treasurer keeps the money, the person tells what they need and the group shops. We buy utensils, cups, kettles, dishes, put nicely in a bundle, and give to her as a present. She serves us as visitors with tea and perhaps food. The woman this month chose a kerosene lantern, *sufria* [pot], blanket and a basin. With these gifts, she gets to shine. We help one woman to shine every month. We have done this since 1984. Many people want to join us, but instead we advise them how to start their own groups. Many have. We are successful, we have assisted members to pay on school fees, buy iron sheets, water tanks and pipes. Sometimes it is clothing for children. Now we are working hard to get water close to our homes. We will work hard to raise money for this.

Conclusion

Listening to women's narratives about membership in groups designed to assist them with their economic dilemmas raises the issue of whether or not Maragoli women's groups are economically "developmental." More importantly, this analysis questions whether they should be expected to be. Our Western construction of reality assumes that women's groups ought to "develop." Stamp (1990) calls this the "hidden assumption" of WID. Development means "increased productivity" resulting in an increased cash flow whether through large-scale intensive commercialization or through the efforts of the small women's group. On the government level, any measure of success must be seen as contributing to the GNP. Indeed, even at the grassroots level, it is normatively assumed that women's co-operative groups are an economic risk-management strategy. This expectation would place Maragoli women's groups on the negative side of the development ledger. A closer examination is required.

Women's contemporary efforts at solidarity do have their roots in past forms of community. Women draw on the experience or ideology of past cooperation to manage today's situation of economic risk. Women continue to act and react together against outside control taking their own and their families' best interests into account. Considering the difficulties they face in an enterprise which may border on political defiance, they have been relatively

successful in remaining together. Women's narratives illuminate the reasons why women's solidarity efforts through licensed groups are currently not very viable financially on the individual level. The group itself may accumulate only a little capital, but all groups continue to work and save for what members hope to be individual economic assistance in the future. Once the plot is owned and the rental building is finally constructed, the proceeds can be divided up; this, or something like it, is the future plan for many groups. However, land and building materials are so expensive that one's grandchildren are likely to be the only beneficiaries. The expectation that women's collective organizations will provide cash for capital accumulation by individuals or, at the government level, contribute to the GNP remains unfulfilled despite economic theories to the contrary. Nonetheless all people, including Women Group members, continue to measure success according to capitalist expectations.

The opportunities for groups to make money are extremely limited. Certainly, most members now recognize that crafts are not a viable economic strategy, and it becomes increasingly difficult to sell food when many people are attempting to do so and few can afford to buy. Former members of groups maintain they can no longer belong. The investment of time and money for dues is something they cannot afford when there is no immediate return. Many groups in Maragoli disintegrate for those reasons.

Still, those group members who are active tell us how they receive at least limited economic support and much more in terms of social support efforts. Women tell of their acquisitions, the normative necessities for births and deaths, clothing and school fees for their children, utensils for the house, corrugated iron roofs and of proposals to construct water tanks, and discuss how they feel "safe" within the parameters of solidarity. This seems to be particularly salient in the smaller, unlicensed groups, which follow their own agendas, devising their own support strategies dedicated to individual accumulation via the collective effort. Women continue to use historic strategies, politicize and economize them, transforming them into appropriate "movements" for today's society. Their efforts are modern and innovative, engaged in with an amazing energy (considering the circumstances), pleasant demeanour, grace and good humour.

When the "modernizing" tactic implicit in capitalism did not improve women's circumstances, the responsibility for women economically bettering themselves, or failing so to do, was placed on their own heads, via women's group work. This observation is not meant to deny the benefits of women's solidarity, only to point out yet another instance in which women are expected to (and indeed do in many circumstances), better their own lot in economic life.[33] Still, if the money does not appear, and it does not in many cases in Maragoli, economic theories are shown to be insufficient. Today, "tradi-

tional" groupness is transformed into an entity with capitalistic intention as its hallmark. However, when "women-in-development" group effort is judged an economic failure, women are disempowered. An unintended consequence is provoked. In their history, Logoli women have politicized their roles in society through their solidarity, exercising their power and influence from the "back door." Today, gender tension is activated as women, exercising community leadership, recount their confrontations with men, often husbands. It is as if women's efforts somehow confront the weaknesses and failures of men's support. (Indeed, this is why men think women only gather to talk about them in the Women Group meetings.) Men view women's solidarity as counterproductive. Furthermore, it contradicts their patriarchal ideology.

The problems and opportunities, the complications and consequences surrounding Logoli women's groups have been examined. Success is relative, measured by identifying common group needs, some of which appear fulfilled even without individual economic accumulation. Is it the hope of riches to come that keeps some of these groups functioning, or is it the security and comfort found in solidarity? "Shine" takes different forms. Cash may be one form, but "helping one another" is prominently invoked as another. In these times of economic risk a point can be made that invoking traditional economic ideologies may be on the increase rather than declining—particularly when elicited by a state edict, *nyayo*, that calls for peace, love, unity and sharing (Abwunza 1990, 1991). *Silika* is actively reconfigured both from the inside and the outside as capitalism invades. Yet *silika* remains a symbol inspired by the efforts of group work and sharing with one another as women organize to control their own labour and production. This is a logical and practical evolution from the past into the future. Women's insistence on gathering in groups against the wishes of some, even when their efforts are denigrated as nonproductive, may be women reclaiming what the invasion of capitalism violated—women's solidarity.

I thank Logoli women for narrating their stories about "gathering at the back door." Undeniably, many of their optimistic voices permit a sentiment which is the very inverse of denigration—"praise"—to "shine" through.

Notes

1. Acknowledgements: Field work was conducted during 1987, 1988, 1992 and 1994. In 1987 and 1988, field work was supported by SSHRC, IDRC and Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto. Permission to engage in research was provided by the Office of the President, Kenya. Affiliation was provided by the University of Nairobi and the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi. In 1992, field work was supported by a SSHRC Internal Research Grant, University of Western Ontario and a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship. In 1994, travel assistance was provided by a Dean's Research Grant, University of Western Ontario. The SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship provided support while writing this article.

2. In February 1992, a group of women, The Mothers of Political Prisoners, along with hundreds of supporters, engaged in a hunger strike and demonstration in Uhuru Park, Nairobi,

Kenya. The Mothers were violently dispersed and arrested by Kenya Police. Many Mothers displayed their naked bodies to the arresting police, inflicting an extreme curse. After their release, the Mothers took up a stand in a Nairobi church for most of 1992.

3. Modern co-operatives with membership drawn from both sexes may take the form of organized Rotating Savings and Credit Associations and Savings and Lending Associations (cf. Levin 1988). In 1994 many urban people I spoke to were co-operative members, some belonging to more than one privately organized group, locally labelled "merry-go-rounds" (Abwunza 1996). What I found interesting in Nairobi was that membership in private co-operatives appears to be gender-specific. When I asked one man why women did not belong to his co-operatives (he belongs to six), he replied, "They have their own." After a pause he said, "You know groups belong to women. They had them first. We men are just beginning." Stimulated by these remarks, my future plan is to extend research inquiry to urban people's economic and social resilience as these are evident in the contemporary development of private co-operative enterprise in Nairobi.
4. Kiswahili for "pulling together," a political rallying call employed by President Kenyatta to stimulate political unity, Kenyan nationalism and self-help projects.
5. Introductory speech, *Maendeleo* building site.
6. President Moi's political slogan, meaning "footsteps" in Kiswahili. Today's *nyayo* refers to the footsteps of the ancestors of all Kenyans, as their descendants are called upon to engage in *maendeleo* (development) in building the nation. Kenya, until the adoption of multiparties in 1992, was immersed in the *Nyayo* era. President Moi and his KANU party are the *Nyayo* administration (Abwunza 1990).
7. The area of this case analysis is Maragoli, Kenya, also referred to as the Location. The people are called Avalogoli, meaning "the people of Logoli." In Bantu languages, the prefix "ava" or "aba" transforms the meaning of the morpheme "Logoli." These compound terms are derived from the name of the ancestor, Mulogoli. Although many who participated in this research requested that their real names be used, some of the information they provided is sensitive. An effort has been made to conceal identities by using common first names since participants' actual names are often lineage derived.
8. Interestingly, the Western world attempts a form of SAP "with a human face," implementing a graduated correction of imbalances within their own economies. In addition, the United States and Canada have yet to choose from numerous political rhetorics any viable policy for deficit reduction. Paul Volcker, past chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, sums this up: "We say to all kinds of countries, 'Fix up your budget deficit and do it by Tuesday.' We ask them to do all kinds of things we are not prepared to do ourselves" (Gladwin 1993:103-4). Gladwin calls SAP programs "draconian measures." Gladwin's comments are reiterated in a recent edition of *African Farmer* where further criticism is directed against the World Bank's efforts to expand "safety nets" in order to alleviate supposedly short-term hardships affecting "vulnerable groups" such as women. Gladwin calls these efforts "paternalistic." Rural women are regarded primarily as victims rather than as the core of the continent's food-production system (January 1994:44).
9. See Gladwin (1993:87-112) for a review of SAP impacts on women, where both negative and positive influences are noted.
10. For example, health costs in Kenya have shot up 250 percent since structural adjustment was renewed in 1991. "As earning power has not risen, the inevitable result is wide-spread and growing malnutrition" (Ngotho in *African Farmer*, January 1994:43).
11. Field interview, October 1, 1987.
12. Field interview, October 26, 1987.
13. Among Avalogoli, all elders are parents and the young are their children. The use of "daughter-in-law" here signifies my relationship to Avalogoli. As they say, I am "married to them."
14. Field interview, December 20, 1987.

15. Field interview, October 10, 1987.
16. Field interview, January 7, 1988.
17. Field interview, March 25, 1988.
18. Field interview, January 22, 1988. Beatrice and Florence were of tremendous assistance in the research activity, travelling with me for weeks as I visited Women Groups.
19. Field interview, December 9, 1987.
20. Field interview, January 28, 1988.
21. In 1994 the same amount of maize was selling for 40 Kshs. on a local market.
22. Field interview, January 28, 1988.
23. Field interview, December 12, 1987.
24. In 1993, this group purchased the equipment (through hire purchase) and began the grinding mill operation. The equipment has "refused," that is, has broken down, on three occasions. In March 1994, the members were trying to accumulate the money to buy spare parts as the "machine has refused" once again.
25. Field interview, January 17, 1988.
26. Field interview, February 11, 1988.
27. Asega is assuming that only men can be "experts."
28. Field interview, January 11, 1988.
29. Field interview, March 3, 1988.
30. Field interview, November 29, 1987.
31. Field interview, February 16, 1988.
32. Field interview, January 2, 1988.
33. Recently it has been suggested that Women's Groups are a source of political activism in AIDS prevention. AIDS is appropriated as a community concern, via women's responsibilities to their families and to the community, to compel AIDS prevention.

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SRI LANKA'S "ARMY OF HOUSEMAIDS": CONTROL OF REMITTANCES AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS[1]

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Abstract: When the mass labour migration of women to the Middle East began in the early 1980s, many Sri Lankan social scientists predicted a revolution in gender equality and a greater participation by women in political and economic decision-making as a result of employment abroad. Noting that gender rarely correlates in predictable ways with social change, and questioning the dominant teleological ideology that change always happens for the better, this article looks at relations between female migrants in a coastal village in the Southwest and the people responsible for spending and saving the money they remit to the village. Several case studies reveal the extent to which men have not taken over tasks such as child care and household chores. In all-male drinking groups, unemployed husbands reassert their masculinity in the face of their wives' new role as breadwinner. The values of the drinking community stand in implicit opposition to values channelling family resources towards "getting developed" (*diyunu venavaa*), the dominant village idiom of successful migration. Several women's stories document their struggles, including the ultimate protest of a suicide attempt, to control the money they send back to the village. In cases where women's work has bettered their family's economic standing in the village, women and their husbands and fathers enjoy new social privileges and authority. Finally, migration as an avenue of escape provides a new option for women caught in untenable home situations. By examining the gendered power dynamics of the microprocesses of social change, this article explores the extent to which women's lives have and have not improved through migration.

Résumé: Au début des années 80 lorsque les migrations en masse de main d'oeuvre féminine vers le Moyen-Orient, ont commencé, de nombreux scientifiques sociaux du Sri Lanka avaient prédit une révolution dans l'égalité des sexes et une plus grande participation des femmes dans les prises de décisions au niveau économique, à cause de l'emploi à l'étranger. Cet article va se pencher sur les relations entre les femmes

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saisonnières d'un village côtier du Sud-Ouest et les responsables des dépenses et des économies engendrées par l'argent que les premières rapportent au village, au regard de la théorie qui dit que le sexe est rarement de façon prévisible en corrélation avec les changements sociaux, et en dépit de l'idéologie téléologique qui affirme que le changement est toujours pour le mieux. Plusieurs études de cas ont montré jusqu'à quel point les hommes n'ont pas rempli les tâches traditionnellement féminines, de l'éducation des enfants et du travail ménager. Les hommes se retrouvent pour boire entre eux et réaffirmer leur masculinité en fonction du nouveau rôle de soutien de famille de leurs épouses. Les valeurs de la communauté des buveurs sont en totale opposition avec les valeurs affectant les ressources familiales pour contribuer au développement (*diyunu venavaa*), c'est-à-dire l'expression employée au village et qui est synonyme de «succès de la migration». Plusieurs femmes ont raconté leurs difficultés, et entre autres la protestation ultimede l'une d'elles se soldant par une tentative de suicide afin de contrôler l'argent envoyé au village. Dans le cas où le travail féminin a amélioré le sort économique de certaines familles du village, les femmes, leurs époux et leurs pères profitent de nouveaux privilèges sociaux et d'une nouvelle autorité. Enfin, la migration sert d'échappatoire aux femmes aux prises avec des situations familiales intenables. En examinant la dynamique du pouvoir des sexes des microprocessus du changement social, cet article veut montrer jusqu'à quel point le sort des femmes s'est ou ne s'est pas amélioré grâce à la migration saisonnière.

Introduction

This article examines gender hierarchies and status relations in a Sri Lankan village as affected by the large and growing migration of female labour to the Middle East. The burgeoning of female labour migration in the mid-1980s brought women's labour into the national limelight. Of the estimated 500 000 Sri Lankans working abroad in 1992, 75 percent were female, with most working as housemaids in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) and other oil-producing states in the Gulf.[2] Sold for wages on the global market, the services housemaids usually performed at home for free suddenly acquired monetary worth, blurring the line between the domestic and the public. A commodity on the global market, performed for strangers, regulated by national and international laws, women's work leapt to the national consciousness. The Sri Lankan government supported the massive migration of labour, which not only reduced the intensity of the unemployment problem by drawing off surplus labour, but also provided the country with a source of valuable foreign exchange. Domestic workers formerly missed in all employment surveys became "our army of housemaids."

Home to roughly 150 families and 1000 people, the village I call Kosgahakanda[3] lies on the lush tropical southwest coast of Sri Lanka. While three

decades ago cinnamon production and coconut fibre industry employed most of the villagers, the past 15 years have seen dramatic shifts in the local economy. Jobs in the armed forces, in the tourist industry and in local garment factories now employ significant numbers of local men and women, but the migration to the Middle East overshadows all other forms of work. In 1994 I found that over a quarter of the village households[4] held current or returned migrants. With women making up 90 percent of the local and 75 percent of the national migrant populations, this change in economic orientation augurs transformations in village and national gender hierarchies, with a large range of local tensions and conflicts arising as women step into the role of wage-earner.

Negotiating Identities

"Getting Developed"

By the most frequently voiced village standards, the goal of migration is *"diyunu venna,"*[5] "to prosper or improve," or "to get developed." A person, family, village or country can *"diyunu venna,"* or acquire more wealth, knowledge or assets. Saying *"minissu vaeDi diyunu venavaa"* means that people have become rich and prosperous, or *"diyunu vecca minissu."* Furthermore, *"diyunu raTaval"* are "developed countries."

Visible display of wealth counted as "getting developed." Almost unanimously, women and men said that migrants went abroad because they wanted to buy land and build a house. In 1968, only families from the highest caste[6] in the village lived in cement or brick houses with tile roofs, while the poorer families lived in clay houses with tin sheets, tar sheets or coconut-frond mats as roofing. Since 1968 population pressure and fragmentation due to inheritance practices had reduced the size of individual home gardens, though the wealthiest villagers still retained the largest land shares. More dramatically, villagers had applied the influx of money from the Middle East to improve their housing. Whereas a cement house with a large garden once unequivocally indicated a wealthy residence, in 1994 in the village area people of all grades and castes owned cement houses (often only half finished) on relatively small plots of land. All who could built good-quality houses, for comfort, health and prestige. A cement house chronicled the high-water mark of money, regardless of continued affluence in the household. Although the diacritic of a good house also indicated wealth in 1969, in 1994 the speed with which family affluence could change had greatly increased. In 1969 the rise and fall of fortune roughly parallelled the life cycle of the house: rich families had big cement houses and poor families had small clay ones. In 1994, some families went hungry in half-finished mansions, while others stored colour televisions under palm-frond roofs. Access to money through migration gave more people the means to improve their standing through land and housing,

thus throwing the scale itself into flux as an indicator of relative wealth and caste status.

Although some migrants permanently improved their social standing, oftentimes families channelled a migrant's earnings to family consumption. Family consumption did not count as a waste in most villagers' opinions, and even families who "got developed" admitted to dipping occasionally into savings. Assuming the husband would continue to work, the family counted on his salary to support most if not all of the immediate local needs. Where husbands did not work, however, often little or nothing remained of the migrant's wages but what she might have saved in the Middle East or invested in jewelry. Jobs available for unskilled male workers in the village were sporadic, labour intensive, difficult, not highly paid and undesirable. Often men preferred not actively to seek out such opportunities, especially if their wives earned good salaries abroad. Local, national and international observers shared a critical attitude towards such instances of voluntary un(der)employment, especially when the family "failed to develop."[7] With the common trope, "He sits idly, drinks, and wastes,"[8] many women expressed frustration with idle husbands. Although they held repaying loans and sustaining a family without further debt as laudable objectives, they did not view these accomplishments as "improvement" per se.

An Interview with Rukmini

Much of my research consisted of interviews with people who had worked in the Middle East and with family members of migrants at that time abroad. I usually conducted interviews in Sinhala, in the homes of the families I spoke with. One of my two research assistants, Mr. Siri de Zoysa and Mrs. Sita Mendis, usually accompanied me for interviews. Long-time local residents, Siri and Sita provided invaluable insights into village history, current rumour, kinship connections, political alliances and other relevant interpersonal dynamics. The three of us often attended ceremonies, rituals and celebrations, as well as circulating more informally through the village.

The following case study represents a typical if slightly extreme example of voluntary male unemployment and the concomitant use of a migrant woman's wages for family consumption. Husband and wife struggled to explain to me and to themselves their lack of "development" despite seven years of work abroad, in the process negotiating the meaning of their poverty and its effect on individual and family identity.

The Kosgahakanda area has two main castes, the Halaagama (Cinnamon Department) caste and the Berava (Drummer) caste. The Halaagama are divided into four subcastes or grades, two of which, the Halaagama Hewapanna (hence HH) and the Halaagama Kurundu Kara (the lower of the two, hence HKK), are represented in the village area (see G. Gamburd 1972). Third from

the top in the overall standing of castes in Sri Lanka, the Halaagama far outrank the Berava, who are listed near the bottom of the caste hierarchy (Ryan 1953).

Siri and I interviewed Hema, an elderly Berava (Drummer) caste woman, and her son Ramesh, asking about Ramesh's wife Rukmini, who was then abroad working as a housemaid. Rukmini, about 30 years old, had spent most of the past seven years abroad. During the four years Rukmini worked in Jordan, she sent her money to her own mother. Having no stable home, Rukmini's mother went from child to child, staying roughly six weeks with each, spending lavishly from the checks Rukmini sent under the pretext of looking after Rukmini's daughter. The next time Rukmini went abroad, she left her daughter with her mother-in-law Hema instead. While Siri, Hema, Ramesh and I sat in the shade of Hema's unfinished cement house, Siri explained to me that Rukmini did not send money to her husband Ramesh, an infamous drinker and gambler. The ice broken by Siri's accurate but joking assessment of the situation, Ramesh's mother Hema took over the story, saying that she had told Rukmini not to send money, but to keep it herself. Feeling Ramesh's race-betting and drinking left no balance of money even to support himself and his daughter, Hema said Ramesh had taken credit with many local stores and owed interest-bearing debts to several moneylenders. Sober and embarrassed, Ramesh, who used to drum and do labouring work, did not deny that he had done little to support himself since his wife went abroad. Hema suggested that if Ramesh could earn money for himself and his daughter, his wife could save all of her salary, and they could buy land and build a house, the original goals of her migration. I asked Ramesh about his work. He said he made about Rs. 125/ (U.S.$2.50, a good salary) a day, plus food when he drummed; he also worked occasionally as a labourer. Taking us into the small, two-room clay house where he, his mother, father, daughter and several brothers all lived, Ramesh showed us a crowded collection of furniture (table, chairs, bed and cabinet with broken glass) bought with Rukmini's savings from her work in Jordan.

Upon her return to the village for the New Year holiday in mid-April 1994, I asked Rukmini to come to my house to talk about migration to the Middle East. Usually I spoke with people at their own houses, but at the time of the interview Rukmini and Ramesh were living in a tiny, six foot by twelve foot, tiled lean-to built against the new cement wall of Hema's unfinished house. Unexpectedly, Ramesh came along to the interview. Drunk for the New Year holiday, Ramesh wanted to talk to us, or at least to hear what Rukmini had to say to us, and to correct her where he felt it necessary. Although being drunk at two o'clock in the afternoon was not exceptional for men in the village, especially around the New Year holiday, people rarely if ever came drunk to an interview with me. Under ordinary circumstances, I would probably have

done a brief interview with both Rukmini and Ramesh, and then tried later to interview Rukmini alone. Since I was leaving for the United States in only two days, and since Rukmini had just returned home, both of our schedules were busy and this represented our only opportunity to talk. With Ramesh on the porch, Sita and I found that Rukmini could barely finish a sentence without him breaking in with commentary. Quickly sizing up the situation, Siri, who had planned to work on kinship charts in the other room during the afternoon, came to the rescue, politely and repeatedly coaxing Ramesh off the porch so that Sita and I could talk with Rukmini.

Palpable tension between Rukmini and Ramesh pervaded the interview. When I asked Rukmini about the gifts she had brought back from the Middle East, Ramesh, who had rejoined us on the porch despite Siri's efforts, said that Rukmini had given him a shirt, but he had gotten his sarong for himself. She replied that she had given him a shirt, shoes and cigarettes. She left her comment at that; it was only later that Siri, who had obtained the full story from Ramesh, explained the implicit barb. Rukmini had given Ramesh a new pair of sandals, a pack of prestigious foreign cigarettes and a new shirt. The police had raided the illegal toddy (coconut beer) brewery where Ramesh had gone to drink, and he had run through a drainage canal to the ocean. Ramesh escaped arrest, but the canal muck claimed his brand new sandals and the salt-water ruined the pack of cigarettes in his shirt pocket. Siri said that Rukmini had also brought back 12 beers and two whisky bottles, all already consumed. Ramesh replied to Rukmini (in what seemed to us at the time a *non sequitur*) that even if he drank, he still saved her clothing. Sita, Siri and I later decided he must have been comparing himself favourably with another husband of a Middle East migrant, who had sold his wife's dresses during her absence. Siri then persuaded Ramesh to go and inspect a rare plant in the garden.

With Ramesh gone, I asked Rukmini if she planned to go back to the Middle East. Saying she intended to go back "no matter how," Rukmini explained animatedly that she had become "fed up" with her husband's drinking. Speaking very quickly, she lamented that there was no use earning money when he was drinking. Although she liked to come home and see her daughter, problems with her husband "unsettled her mind." Complaining that her husband never listened to her, Rukmini said, "He breaks things and wastes and drinks."[9] Rukmini's variation on the common saying, "He sits idly, drinks, and wastes,"[10] showed she felt Ramesh's destructive behaviour to be worse than the indolence and dissipation implied by the rhetorical phrase.

Ramesh returned to the porch. Hoping for a neutral topic, perhaps a story of childhood illness, I asked Rukmini what had been the worst time in her life. She said the hardest part of her life started after getting married. Ramesh exclaimed, "Really?" They talked heatedly about a fight several years earlier that had ended with both of them filing separate complaints at the police sta-

tion at the junction, a common conclusion to serious village disputes. Protesting loudly, Ramesh drunkenly accused his wife of abandoning their daughter and neglecting her duties. Silenced, Rukmini picked up Sita's umbrella from the table, examining it with great care. Centre stage and unchecked, Ramesh went on talking about himself and how hard he had been working for the family's sake. Ramesh's monologue continued for several minutes, without Rukmini's interaction, Sita's translation assistance or my note-taking. In the uncomfortably confrontational atmosphere, Rukmini, slouching low in her cane armchair, turned slightly away from her husband. I caught her eye and winked at her. Suddenly sitting up straighter and relaxing physically, Rukmini told Ramesh to go home and she would answer my questions.

Not well versed in the cross-cultural connotations of winking, this was my only use of the wink as interview technique. As I read the situation, Rukmini had worried I would accept at face value everything I heard about how she had neglected her family and how hard Ramesh had worked to make up her shortfall; my wink positioned me with many local women who listen to men without interrupting or contradicting, but also without believing all that they hear. Realizing Ramesh's impaired state but recognizing his cultural prerogative as a male to dominate the conversation, none of the women on the porch that afternoon challenged his assertions beyond Rukmini's initial spirited protest that her married life had been hard. Rukmini, caught between the wish to defend herself and the embarrassment of arguing with a drunken husband in front of a foreigner and two higher-caste villagers, chose silence as her best defense until my unvoiced support assured her that none of us took Ramesh's drunken ramblings seriously. That leverage allowed her not to confront his misrepresentations directly, but to ask him to leave. In other situations where sober men dominated conversations, I often found women approached me later in private with contradicting information they had not wanted to voice in public. While for the most part accepting men's right to dominate the public transcript (Scott 1990), women made ample use of other opportunities to make their own opinions heard.

That afternoon on the porch Rukmini and Ramesh negotiated interpretations of their continued poverty and their failure in the community mind to "get developed." Each attempted to control the narrative, influence judgments and shape appraisals. I look at the husband-wife dynamics in this interview as a struggle over meaning in the making, as each attempted to define his or her own agency, identity and self-worth with respect to the story. By including himself in my invitation to talk, and by excluding Rukmini from conversation when he could, Ramesh sought to prevent Rukmini (and me) from portraying Rukmini as the decision-maker and breadwinner. Ramesh wanted to be thought of as part of a team, even as leader, instead of as a dead weight or someone who "sits at home idle, eating while his wife works." His mono-

logues sought to retell the story of what happened to all the money Rukmini had sent home, simultaneously reworking his own image in his and my eyes.

Despite spending seven years abroad, Rukmini had not accumulated significant savings. When I asked during the interview what Rukmini envisioned her life to be like in another 10 years, she said that she would like her whole family to live in a nice house of their own. Although she had already saved enough money for some land, she could not yet afford to put up a house, and planned to return to the Middle East to work again.[11] After Ramesh and Rukmini left our porch, Siri, Sita and I discussed their situation. Voicing a unanimous village assessment, Siri commented, "It's a real shame/sin, that she/they are living (like that), having just come from the Middle East."[12] Siri and Sita speculated whether the family had enough good food to eat. Seeing Rukmini as pressured from all sides for money, Sita portrayed not only Ramesh but many members of Rukmini's extended family as negotiating their relationships with her, which they judged by the sort of present she gave them. Despite Rukmini's generosity, many were disappointed. Sita doubted if enough money remained even for a small piece of land as Rukmini had asserted. Although housemaids cannot directly supervise the handling of the money they remit, they have the right to keep some or all of their earnings with them abroad. The distribution of money for consumption must have taken place with Rukmini's explicit, or at least tacit, consent. Nevertheless, Rukmini also held the goal of buying land and building a house, and felt some disappointment for having very little of lasting material worth to show for her seven years abroad. Rukmini walked a difficult line between giving and saving, between preserving and strengthening family ties by redistributing money and "getting developed."

Alcohol: Group Bonding and Masculinity

Much of the money Rukmini brought home went to settle Ramesh's debts and to finance his New Year drinking binge. Drinking, a mark of masculinity and wealth (if only temporary in certain cases), preoccupied many of the under- and unemployed village men. Men and women talking about families that did not "get developed" from female migration to the Middle East often put the blame on husbands like Ramesh, who quit work and took to drinking in the absence of their wives. At once scorning and tolerating such husbands, villagers included drink in the common expression, "He sits idly, drinks, and wastes." When I inquired into the motives for their behaviour, several people suggested that the drinking men emulated richer landowners of the previous generation. One village notable explained to me, "It is good to be rich and look idle; in the absence of riches, looking idle will suffice." Hard work, particularly physical labour, carries significant stigma in the village; light skin, clean white clothing and a sweatless brow indicate leisure, high status or at the very least a respectable office job out of the burning sun.

Alcohol was a rich and multivocal point of reference in the village; it was a business, a medicine, a pleasure, a need and a mark of masculinity. It was the despair of many a wife, and a basis of community between drinking buddies. The role alcohol played in village society was part and parcel of the phenomenon of the idle husband. When Rukmini came home, Ramesh made claims on her money, mainly using it to drink and improve his status as buyer of "rounds" and patron of poorer male friends and relatives who also wished to drink. Recognizing his needs, Rukmini provided him not only with money but also with high-prestige foreign liquor.

Complicit in her husband's addiction, Rukmini nevertheless sought to set limits on his drinking. While men felt shame for living off money their wives sent from abroad, blame often fell on the absent woman, without whose control a man drifted helplessly into bad habits and bad company. Women bore the responsibility of disciplining the family and regulating household finances; village discourse held the wife largely responsible for any misadventures that might befall her husband during her stay abroad. Constitutionally incapable of controlling his own behaviour, the man depended on his wife to regulate his conduct, despite the fact she held little authority with which to enforce her responsibility.

Usually a male social activity, alcohol drinking in the village did not correspond to what many Westerners would call "social drinking," or having a beer or a few cocktails before dinner. Villagers distinguished between men who drank occasionally at celebrations, funerals and with friends, on the one hand, and those who drank regularly with a group dedicated to that purpose. At weddings, funerals and other, mixed-sex social get-togethers the host would often "run a bottle" of hard liquor out of a back room visited surreptitiously by most of the male guests, who became progressively drunker as the event proceeded. Even in the cases villagers deemed acceptable drinking, men condemned eating while drinking because it reduced the "current" or "high."[13] Inasmuch as men strove to get as drunk as possible as quickly as possible, "drinking to excess" was the norm, not the exception to the rule.

Extremely expensive in the village, a bottle of the local hard liquor, arrack, cost roughly what a manual labourer might earn in a day. In the case of almost all families in the village, if a man drank as much as socially required, he would have spent more than his family could afford. Women, who rarely if ever touched alcohol, applied a constant gendered pressure to spend money for family consumption instead of for alcohol. While villagers often blamed a man's drinking on his wife's absence, many people also noted that characteristic patterns of drinking and spending, as well as failure to "get developed," predated, and often prompted, female migration.[14] To save money, most local men drank *kasippu*, the local moonshine,[15] engaging in recurrent games of hide and seek with the police, as well as with their wives.

The consumption and production of alcohol formed a large subsection of the village economy. Despite debts and hunger in the family, some men spent a great deal on alcohol. *Kasippu* manufacturers, who distilled at night in remote, wooded places, employed large numbers of local men. Offering wages of Rs. 150/ (U.S.$3) a night, with free food and drink, one village outfit went into production twice a week, running three stills all night, with each still requiring six people's constant attention. Including production crews, complicit landowners and law enforcement officers and distribution networks, the business (one of several in the area) directly involved over 50 individuals. Among the wealthiest people in the area, *kasippu* king-pins paid their labourers well, but this money rarely resurfaced to build houses and buy land.

Drinking groups, often centred around a particular *kasippu* producer, formed strong factions of loyalty and identity within the village. Shifting groups of local men, usually of similar age and status, gathered together regularly to drink, surreptitiously visiting a distribution centre several times or purchasing a bottle and taking it to a private location. Often those with money sported drinks for those without, receiving the favour in return at a later date. Providing drinks free to others and working with the manufacturer ensured one of ready access to liquor in less affluent times.

Although rarely acknowledged by the more respectable leaders in the village, drinking groups carried political power. Heavy drinkers adopted the values and norms of their group which tolerated, even encouraged, such activities as gambling, stealing, rape and assault. British anthropologist Jonathan Spencer glosses "*lajja*" as shame, shyness, social restraint, all essential ingredients of good public behaviour. He glosses "*lajja-baya*" as shame-fear, particularly the fear of ridicule and public humiliation (Spencer 1990:169-172). Those who drink are thought not to know "*lajja*" or "*baya*," and "it is assumed that people who drink alcohol will no longer be in control of their actions and easily aroused to anger which would be likely to spill out in physical violence, given the opportunity" (ibid.:183). Outsiders occasionally employ such people to assault opponents (within and outside the village) and burn their houses and property (Ratnapala 1985). Other villagers feared such drinking groups, especially those with histories of thuggery and intimidation.

At the same time, drinking men remained integrated into the structure of village kinship and friendship networks, and producers provided generous financial and other support and protection to individuals and to village institutions such as schools and temples. *Kasippu* production groups maintained guardedly friendly ties with individuals among the law enforcement officers, and often contributed financially to individuals with political power. For reasons varying from loyalty to fear villagers rarely challenged drinking groups or reported their misdeeds to higher authorities (many already complicit in the network).

As a woman and a foreigner I never participated in any drinking group activities, and while I gathered a great deal of second-hand information about the "who," I can only speculate on the "why" of group involvement. An extenuating circumstance that could be utilized whenever needed (Ratnapala 1985:26, Fekjaer 1993), drunkenness provided the perfect alibi for deeds of poor judgment and socially unacceptable actions, allowing responsibility to fall outside, on the substance itself, for any foolish actions, and on the absent controlling element in the social structure, the wife, for the drinking itself. Alcohol consumption provided relief from personal responsibility for men who failed to earn as much as their wives or who failed to apply their wives' salaries towards "getting developed." With development in the village resting primarily on female migration to the Middle East, some men may have looked to their male peer group to reassert their self-worth in the face of the loss of male power and respect inherent in their wives' new economic roles. Involvement with *kasippu* production and distribution provided poor men with alcohol, money, community and a mode of rejecting the dominant idiom of "getting developed." Drinkers thus paradoxically emulated the idle rich of prior generations, while rejecting the work ethics of the newer breed of wealthy villager. Migration and alcohol consumption inextricably intertwined in the construction of new identities for village men and women.

Joker, Simpleton, Free Thinker: Lal

Considered to be one of the most successful village families involved with the migration of labour to the Middle East, Indrani and her husband Chandradasa represent a new élite in the Kosgahakanda area. Chandradasa worked as a security officer at a hotel near Colombo, returning home for the weekend twice a month. Siri said that they had used their money "in a perfectly correct way," saving and spending both spouses' salaries wisely. In Indrani and Chandradasa's absence, Chandradasa's mother and brother took care of their five children and supervised the construction of their new house. Although Indrani named her mother-in-law as the primary caregiver, the older woman's arthritis severely restricted her movements, and the children's uncle Lal did the lion's share of the cooking and housekeeping. Lal, a puzzling and unusual individual, forms the focus of the rest of this section.

Living across the road from Siri's house, Lal drew drinking water from the well in Siri's garden. Members of our household replied to the greetings Lal called out every time he entered the compound, with teasing comments and questions. Referring to the state of the meal Lal was preparing, Siri invariably asked, "Is the (cooking) course over?"[16] For a man to study cooking in school would be just slightly more astounding than to find him cooking at all. In a world of simple structural reversals, when the houseworker leaves to earn a living, one might expect the former breadwinner to do the housework. On a

village level, with a large number of women absent at any one time, one might expect unemployed and underemployed men to step in and help out with child care, cooking and other chores. In the cultural milieu of Kosgahakanda's extended families, however, not men but other women took over "feminine" chores, with grandmothers and aunts looking after the children left at home. Lal, a man who cooked, kept house, did laundry and shopping and took care of children, was a figure of some astonishment and amusement in the village.

Not very attractive by village standards, Lal had married at his mother's insistence some six or seven years before I met him. His beautiful wife first asked him to move to her relatives' home in the capital; when he refused, she found work in the Middle East and never returned to the village. Although fairly sure that she had come home safely, Lal had no desire to visit her relatives in the city or to see her again. When his sister-in-law Indrani left for U.A.E., Lal and his mother moved in with Chandradasa to look after the children.

One afternoon in November, the nearly illiterate Lal asked Siri's father (the local Justice of the Peace) to write a letter to the *Graamaseevaka* (Local Government Administrator) asking to be put on a list to receive a house from a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The J.P. deliberately and in jest wrote a completely unsuitable letter telling the *Graamaseevaka* the stark truth, that Lal lived in a good cement house with electricity and a television. (Lal's official residence, a collapsing clay house, formed the basis of a subsequent successful application.) The innocent Lal took the letter to the *Graamaseevaka* who, upon reading it, said, "This won't do at all," and suggested that he and Lal both go talk to the J.P. Once on the J.P.'s porch, the J.P. and the *Graamaseevaka* took the opportunity good humouredly to corner Lal and ask him questions about his personal life.

Siri, curious but sensing himself not welcome in the discussion, took a long bath at the well adjacent to his father's porch, and overheard the gist of the conversation. The J.P. and the *Graamaseevaka* teasingly peppered Lal with questions about his wife, asking if he had sent cards and sweets to her in the Middle East. They also asked about Lal's private sexual life, determining that Lal did not know "which end was up," which Siri thought might account for Lal's wife's desertion.[17] Having exhausted the topic, the J.P. wrote a suitable letter for Lal. Siri was of the opinion that the *Graamaseevaka* and the J.P. had planned the whole scenario in advance.

When Siri and I interviewed Lal several days earlier,[18] he spoke about a series of manual jobs and positions as "office peon."[19] About 40 years old at the time I knew him, Lal had not held an official job since he was hit by a van while walking on the side of the road in 1987. Lal said that he had no wish to return to work and no ambitions to set up a business. Lal's mother, who had persuaded him to marry in the first place, thought he should do so again. Quot-

ing a proverb, Lal said, "The man who is hit with the firebrand from the fire is afraid even of the fire-fly"[20] (the local equivalent of "Once bitten, twice shy"). After his mother's death, when all of his family duties were fulfilled, Lal said he would like to become a monk.

Lal's usual calm, slow, joking style made him a hard target to tease. Of the recipients of government aid, he was the only man who waited in line with the women to collect food at the local Co-op. Lal regaled those pointing out his feminine behaviour with humorous stories of his finicky tastes in groceries; attempting to laugh at him, people found themselves instead laughing with him about the dead gecko in the rice bag and the dried fish so smelly it must have been fertilizer. He met comments on his domesticity with exaggerated stories of the latest crises in the kitchen, the rough quality of a new soap and the price of beans. Lal's complaints were uniformly within his "feminine" role, not about it. He created an ambiguous self-image, somewhere between a simpleton with no understanding of his failure to fulfill a man's proper role and a free-thinker impervious to criticism, holding a singularly different set of values. With his baffling opacity and his non-stop wit, Lal carved out a unique space for himself as a male mother and housewife. The good-humored probing of the *Graamaseevaka* and the J.P. indexed at once the community's awareness of Lal's unusual behaviour and their baffled and amused acceptance.

Lal's role of male mother complemented the new status and prestige his sister-in-law Indrani's accumulated wealth gave her in the village. Several days after her return from the Middle East, three village youths asked her to "open" a community gathering at which sago pudding was distributed free of charge.[21] Solicited in advance, Indrani's financial contribution was generous. Although Indrani said she had had no other such requests, she mentioned that she and Chandradasa had contributed to a large ceremony at the temple. "Opening" occasions and making donations to the temple, formerly the domain of certain wealthy men from HH-caste families, index Indrani's family's "development," economic clout and new access to power and authority. Their financial capital metamorphosed into the prestige of the symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977) of respect and renown.

Within three or four days of their return from the Middle East, women often made offerings to the Buddhist temple and the Hindu shrine.[22] These offerings expressed thanks for a safe and prosperous migration, while also promoting the spiritual development or "merit"[23] that came from making donations to the temple. Those who could made substantial contributions to annual religious ceremonies, while also contributing to secular festivals.[24] Watching cynically for signs of returning poverty, villagers recognized the difficulty of maintaining Middle East wealth without repeat migration. Patrons sustaining their positions for a significant length of time achieved recognition in the vil-

lage as people who had truly "gotten developed." Along with buying land and building a house, contributing lavishly to community projects symbolized a rise in prestige and social standing, entitling one to positions of authority in community politics and temple decision-making, formerly the domain of wealthy, HH-caste men. Although the most successful migrants from Kosgahakanda were HH-caste men, a newly wealthy Berava-caste family and several women from the HKK caste have made significant contributions to the village, indicating their potential bids to increased village status.

How Lal and Indrani would negotiate the transformation of their roles when Indrani returned permanently to the village remained to be seen. If Indrani resumed the household chores, would she still retain the status and prestige her migration gave her? Would Lal relinquish the care of his nieces and nephews and his somewhat comic role of male housewife? Towards the end of my stay in the village, Lal started a new cement house on his land, which was funded by his brother and sister-in-law. He said that he and his mother would move to that house when Indrani returned from the Middle East.[25] With a new cement house, Lal would also count as someone who "got developed," and thus as someone of significance in the village.

Several common trends can be traced between the diametrically opposed cases of Indrani's family who succeeded in the eyes of the community and Rukmini's family's failure to "get developed." Grete Brochmann (1987) noted that families who rely on migrants' remissions for daily consumption could rarely rise up out of poverty or amass the money to buy a house. Gunatilleke (1992) remarked that families with pre-existent resource bases had much greater chances of successful migration than those without. Budgeting abilities, clear priorities and good communication within the family also facilitated successful migration. Without shared perceptions of benefits and responsibilities for all family members involved, potential for wasting money increased.

Rukmini's husband and mother distributed her remittances widely through family and drinking-group networks; when Rukmini returned to Sri Lanka she found not savings but debts. In contrast, Chandradasa saved his wife's wages, supporting the family on his own generous salary. Already wealthier than average in the village, Chandradasa and his wife shared a common goal for her migration in 1981 and successfully implemented their plan, accumulating wealth while redistributing a portion of the profits to close family members, such as Lal, and to community projects. Social prestige (such as Indrani's donation to the free sago pudding distribution) also counted toward (and sprang from) their new status as village patrons. While Indrani and Chandradasa's position allowed them to maintain a high standard of living while still distributing money, Rukmini's family's different desires fragmented her savings, leaving little or nothing with which to make a permanent, visible

improvement to their living conditions. Rukmini faced the unenviable task of budgeting insufficient funds to everyone's dissatisfaction, including her own. Villagers pitied and scorned Rukmini's immediate family for having little besides furniture to show for seven years of work abroad. Rukmini found it difficult to refuse money to her many deserving and needy relatives and to her demanding husband; few poor village families dared to risk alienating relatives for the sake of their own material prosperity. A burden to the rich, a large and generous family provided a good insurance policy to the poor. Family networks directing money from those with surplus to those in need operated to level down migrants' accumulated wealth; only by protecting a moderate resource base could migrants make the leap from a peer among equals to a patron among clients.

Ramesh, Lal and Chandradasa, three village men associated with female migrants, positioned themselves in radically different roles vis-à-vis the working women in their families. Ramesh's drinking, his excessive braggadocio and his deliberate cultivation of the idle life challenged Rukmini to "get developed" despite, not with the aid of, her husband. Membership in the drinking group affirmed Ramesh's masculinity, assuaged his shame or guilt (*lajja*) for not "getting developed" and provided the economic and social community he may have missed in his wife's absence. Chandradasa, by comparison, found his identity in hard work away from home. The co-operative and trusting relationship he held with his wife gave him control not only of his own salary but also of the money she earned abroad. Willingly remitted for the construction of their house, her pay enhanced both spouses' standard of living and prestigious standing in the village. The avant-garde simpleton Lal, who took on all the "feminine" chores in Indrani's absence, encountered daily joking comments about his cooking and the laundry with unfailing good humour. Each man asserted his masculinity differently: Ramesh through idleness and alcohol, Chandradasa through work and wealth and Lal through a humorous, playful, self-parodying exaggeration of the feminizing nature of his housekeeping role.

Gendered Power Dynamics in the Control of Remittances

When Domestic Work Is Taken Out of the Domestic Economy

Sold for wages on the global market, the services housemaids usually performed at home for free suddenly acquired monetary worth. A commodity on the global market, rendered for strangers and regulated by national and international laws, women's work leapt to the national consciousness. Domestic workers formerly missed in employment surveys became "our army of housemaids." Sri Lankan social scientists speculated that through salaried employment women would acquire a certain degree of control over the money they earned, leading, at least in theory, to an increased access to decision-making,

power and authority. R.B.M. Korale (1983:23) noted that the migration of labour provided women with a mobility "unimaginable a few years ago." He stated:

> The economic necessities which fuel these migration flows will alter the social relationships within family units and in society as a whole. It is also expected that the desire for greater independence and participation in the social and economic process by women will be enhanced. The wealth acquired by females and the dependence of other household members on this income, will further buttress their social transformation resulting in greater social and economic rights being granted to females. (Korale 1983:23)

Using research done 10 years after this optimistic prophecy, I explore in detail the extent to which women gained substantial independence, and the forces militating against dramatic upheavals in village social hierarchies.

Like Korale, I set out to explore the impact of new economic opportunities on gender hierarchies in the village. Understanding the change, and the lack of change, in gender roles spurred analysis of the nature of women's work prior to the advent of migration to the Middle East. Women have always worked hard for their families. Scholars suggested that worldwide, while women made up 33 percent of the official labour force, they accounted for 66 percent of all the working hours, received 10 percent of the world's income and owned less than 1 percent of the world's property (Peiris 1989).[26] However, scholars often did not count female-gendered tasks as "work" or count housework as "employment"; only labour remunerated with wages made a difference in many economic analyses. Korale, who predicted the revolution in women's lives, wrote about migrants, "In the case of females, the majority of returned migrants were housewives when they migrated, and were not really economically active females" (Korale 1983:12). He continued to note that women in the "role of the housewife" were not "actively seeking work." Similarly, D.M. Ariyawansa reported that in a 1988 survey of Middle East migrants, 93 percent of the migrant women were "unemployed/underemployed" before going abroad (Ariyawansa 1988). The gendered division of labour and the accompanying ideology of "women's work" obscured the role of women in the economy, where they were assumed to be secondary or supplementary earners (Jayaweera 1989). Women's perceived economic "inactivity" in the literature mirrored not their daily performance, but rather the "self-interested tailoring of descriptions and appearances by dominant powerholders" (Scott 1990:54), in this case scholars and policy-makers, who defined and discussed "work" in such a way that women's contributions disappeared.[27]

Surveys on migration stumbled into murky territory; did the "re-entrant" qualify as a "housewife" again or was she "unemployed?" This semantic difficulty revealed the necessity of incorporating services performed daily by women for their families into a fuller picture of "work," not only the work of

migrants to the Middle East, but also unpaid labour of any individual living in a household, whether male or female. Meillassoux's (1981) analysis of primitive accumulation and the subsidy of the capitalist economy by the domestic economy went some way toward an integrated approach to the question of labour. Mary Steedly writes, "By moving (slightly) against the grain of official discursive practices I hope to make explicit the necessary exclusions by means of which all narratives . . . are engendered" (Steedly 1993:31). While agreeing that migration may bring about changes in women's positions in the village, I see no one-to-one correlation between wage labour and gender equality. The forces in the village that controlled the fruits of women's work before the advent of migration still operated within households, mitigating social change. The (scholarly) myth of the housewife's economic inactivity was part and parcel of the gendered cultural ideologies that devalued and controlled women's labour.

Taking domestic work out of domestic economy did indeed send a series of shock waves through village social hierarchies, giving migrant women leverage toward gender transformations. Changes stemmed not from the work itself, but from the new meaning of the work. Significance arose not so much from a difference in the services women performed, but from the people for whom they laboured and the importance attributed to their work and wages. Although cash wages changed the balance of power in the family and community, researchers should recognize that control of the wages fit into other preexistent family structures, which regulated women's work before their migration. The re-negotiation of gender hierarchies thus rested not so much on work and wages per se, but on an ideological battle for recognition of what counts as justice, authority and women's rights.

Village women explicitly equated the work they did abroad "for the market" with their everyday activities "in the home" in Sri Lanka. Work abroad gave women no other marketable skills with which to enhance their earnings upon their return, or to challenge the gendered division of labour. Poorly paid and not well respected, jobs as domestic servants in Sri Lanka seldom if ever drew village women out of their houses. Having taken several days to relax, most women integrated quickly into their former roles, cooking and caring for their family. In her study of Sri Lankan female migrants to Singapore and Hong Kong, Malsiri Dias (Dias and Weerakoon-Gunawardene 1991) suggested women stepped relatively easily back into their household role of wife and mother. During their work abroad, they neither adopted any foreign ways nor assumed a different ethnic identity. Although they gained confidence for dealing with crises, women did not go far in rejecting accepted customs or starting their own businesses or taking on roles of community leadership. Dias claimed that women took a passive approach, fitting back into their households smoothly.

While Korale's optimistically predicted gender revolution has not yet come to full blossom, I feel Dias's pessimistic portrayal of passive women also oversimplifies changes in practices and ideologies in the village. Despite lack of great changes in their home work environment, I feel that women who made money in the Middle East recognized the worth of their labour and their rights to its fruits. They came to a certain self-worth and dignity through their jobs that lent them assurance in their struggle for power. Changes in women's social positioning took place not on a *tabula rasa*, but in the context of pre-existing gender hierarchies and cultural ideologies that discounted women's work to begin with. A situation where many poor women had ready access to gainful employment, while poor men did not, threatened earlier patterns of dominance and subordination and the identity of village men. Mediated by a number of pre-existing cultural factors, women's new financial clout did not lead directly to an increase in their authority and decision-making power; change came slowly, balked and barred at every juncture.

In the following section, focussing on the contestation and re-negotiation of gendered power structures, I examine three cases where husband and wife struggled over the control of remittances. Authority and decision-making as to who spent the wages and how counted as much or more than the labour itself. I explore the ways in which local processes "renewed, recreated, defended, and modified" the lived hegemony of village life in the face of a new economic orientation that "resisted, limited, altered, and challenged" it (Williams 1977:112). Absent from the village for long periods of time, migrants often sent their money home to others; village spouses controlling remittances accrued as much or more status from the new wealth than the migrant him- or herself. Paradoxically, the "greater independence and participation in the social and economic process" which Korale predicted as a byproduct of migration appeared as much or more in village wives of male migrants as in the female migrants themselves. Despite an influx of money, pre-migration intra-family hierarchies and gender ideologies proved resistant to change. By looking at the incrementally shifting habits and attitudes of ordinary people in their everyday worlds, I explore the rupture and reinforcement of older village practices in flux.

Theft and the Extended Family: Ranjani's House

A tall, thin woman with worry lines beyond her years, Ranjani lived with her grown son and daughter on the marshy back portion of her sister's small land plot. After eight years of work abroad, Ranjani lived in a house she described as "like a kennel where bitches have puppies,"[28] a tiny two-room clay hut with coconut-frond roofing. She said that some women would have drunk poison if what had happened to her had happened to them.

Receiving a piece of land in a government land distribution in 1980, Ranjani and her husband Sarath started building a large house in 1986 with the money she sent home from working for two years in Saudi Arabia. Construction continued, funded by Ranjani's next job in Jordan. Tension between the couple grew, however, over Sarath's infidelity with a neighbourhood woman and over how to spend Ranjani's remittances. Although Sarath asked that Ranjani not give any money to her parents, she sent them some secretly. Furious when he discovered her deception, Sarath fought with Ranjani's parents; her elderly father's leg broke in the brawl. In 1988, while Ranjani was still in Jordan, her husband sold their house and land for much less than its worth[29] and bought a second house farther from her parents' land.[30] Having allowed both the bank account and the land to be written in her husband's name, Ranjani had little leverage to prevent the sale.

Upon her return from Jordan, Ranjani said her husband beat her to keep her from being too close to her family, but, when he hit her, she ran to her parents. Having burnt her identity card and her clothing, Sarath sold the second house at a loss,[31] took the money and left the village to live with his lover. Ranjani met her husband once at a fair after the separation; she told me with pride that she hit him in the face with her umbrella. Despite urgings from her family and friends, however, Ranjani refused to go to the courts to claim her half of the money her husband made from selling their house and land. Although she felt others would have attempted suicide in her situation, she said that she did not want anything from him.

After her husband sold their house and left, Ranjani returned to the Middle East. Working two years in Kuwait, she sent her money to her mother, who paid off loans and took care of household expenses. Only a minimal sum remained in the bank when Ranjani returned to Sri Lanka. Ranjani worked another two years in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E., with a similar lack of lasting material benefit. In 1994, just before I left Sri Lanka, Ranjani got a job in Jordan, from which she vowed she would not return until she had saved enough money to buy some land and build a good house.

Denigrating Sarath with a common saying villagers use to define a wasteful husband, Ranjani said, "He just sat at home eating what I sent." This implication of idle consumption fails to capture the extent of Sarath's deeds; jealously eager to accumulate wealth in the form of a luxurious cement house, he also proved capable of squandering Ranjani's earnings on a grand scale. It fell to Ranjani's natal family, not her husband, to spend her earnings for daily consumption. Although Ranjani broke with her husband in order to be able to provide for her family, at the same time she sought at least a minimal personal well-being she had not as yet achieved. Whether women "got developed" from their work abroad depended to a great extent on the people handling their

remittances. Embedded in family networks, women found few if any role models for a post-migration life as independent individuals.

A group of women who were present during one of my several interviews with Ranjani discussed strategies for retaining access to and control over money earned abroad. Many women said they registered bank accounts and land that they purchased in their own names, despite inconveniences to people at home. All said they counselled future migrants to keep their money with them, only sending occasional gifts for the holidays. Money regularly remitted often vanished before the migrant returned home. Group agreement on ways and means of managing their new financial responsibilities indicated a growing female awareness of power issues central to gender transformations and the control of remittances. However, even these knowledgeable women rarely followed their words of wisdom themselves; other priorities superseded their desire to accumulate personal wealth.

Selfishness, Success and Suicide: Kamala

Five years after Ranjani's dramatic domestic tragedy, a similar situation arose again in the village area. A young village migrant named Kamala quarrelled with her husband over control of three-and-a-half years' worth of remittances; distribution of money to the extended family and a house and land figured in this case also.

When I first spoke with Kamala's mother, Caroline, in May 1993, Kamala had been in Dubai, U.A.E., for nearly three years. Caroline, a plump and cheerful mother of 10 grown children, looked after her daughter Kamala's two sons during the day and their father Pradeep took them in the evenings. Kamala usually sent all of her money to her husband. Caroline and Pradeep had quarrelled fiercely when Kamala sent some money directly to her mother. Resenting both his stinginess and his control over her daughter, Caroline said that, although she looked after and fed his children, Pradeep only occasionally gave her money or food items.

In January 1994 Sita and I talked with Caroline again. When we mentioned the Middle East, Caroline started to cry, saying that Kamala, who had returned from Dubai the previous October, had been very ungrateful to her lately. Although Caroline had looked after her daughter's children for three years, Kamala had given her no money and no thanks. Even when Caroline was in the hospital, Kamala had not come to visit. Crying harder, Caroline pointed towards her daughter's house and said that mothers love daughters more than sons; the sons wander away, but the daughters should stay loving. Kamala's behaviour hurt her badly.

Three days after we talked with Caroline, Kamala attempted suicide by drinking a poisonous weed killer. While Kamala's children stood by bewildered, the neighbour across the street rushed to help. After a 10-day stay at the

hospital, Kamala returned to the village and rested with her husband's family. Kamala's mother and father never went to see their daughter in the hospital. Village rumour reported that Pradeep had given Kamala's money to his sister, who had been loaning it out for interest. Although Kamala kept asking her husband to get some of the money back so that she could give gifts to her mother and siblings, he kept refusing. At the same time, he took some of Kamala's money from his sister to buy himself a bicycle frame and to drink and smoke *ganja* (marijuana). Frustrated and furious over the lack of access to her own money, Kamala expressed her despair in a suicide attempt (more on this below).

A month after she returned from the hospital, Sita and I talked with Kamala about her experience in the Middle East. Saying she went abroad "to get developed," Kamala mentioned a desire to buy the house she and Pradeep had rented for six years or to build another. Kamala worked for a large family in rural U.A.E., where she looked after nine children, cleaned, cooked, fed the livestock and did the laundry. In her narrative, Kamala related how she handled several crises arising during her stay in the Middle East, portraying herself as decisive and assertive. After each instance that she stood up for her rights, she claimed her situation improved. Stressing the importance of self-confidence, Kamala suggested that a fearful attitude towards Arabic employers doomed a housemaid to restricted mobility and slavishly hard work.

In her narrative about life in U.A.E., Kamala painted herself as practical, self-reliant, thrifty and strong. Confronting her employers over unpaid wages and accompanying a neighbour housemaid to the police in a dispute, Kamala portrayed herself as assertive and courageous. Elements of her life in Sri Lanka stood in marked contrast; although Kamala had the option to return to work with her former employers, she said her husband would not allow it. Pradeep not only controlled her past wages and regulated her relationship with her parents, he also limited her future work opportunities. Hoping to explore her motivations, I said, "Don't get angry when I say this, but I heard that you drank poison."[32] Kamala covered her eyes and did not reply, and Sita gently turned the conversation to more mundane matters.

In Sri Lanka, threats of suicide are common and attempts frequent; in the world Sri Lanka ranks second only to Hungary for suicides per unit of population (Marecek 1993), with both men and women attempting and committing suicide in roughly equal numbers. Writing of suicide as an aggressive act aimed at expressing frustration and at causing mental pain, Jonathan Spencer notes its prevalence in relationships where "The overt expression of anger is quite simply unthinkable" (Spencer 1990:186). In Sri Lanka, wives and children cannot freely express anger or frustration against husbands and parents. Seen in relation to her self-portrayal as decisive, independent and uncowed abroad, Kamala's suicide attempt represents not only the psychological

despair of alienated labour, but also the forceful expression of extreme dissatisfaction. Bringing her grievances into the public eye, Kamala's action seriously challenged Pradeep's authority over her money, sociability and mobility. Yet even if Kamala's protest gained her leverage in the struggle for financial control, the ineffectiveness of less drastic measures indicate just how much power gender relations entrenched in the household still retained. Despite Kamala's self-destructive initiative, she never obtained clear control of her money during my stay in the village.

Pradeep and Kamala married for love, against their families' wishes. Instead of letting her parents arrange a match, Kamala declared her independence and exercised her right to choose. While in-laws retained a great deal of influence in the lives of couples married "by proposal," village custom did not sanction their interference in the lives of couples who eloped. Since Kamala had chosen her husband, her parents assumed that his use of her money met her tacit consent. In the village, material gifts sanction and ratify social bonds. For Kamala, the inability to give to her parents on their request became a negation of her social duty to them, a denial of her relatedness, a rejection of kinship and ultimately a rejection of self.

Piecing together information from different more and less reliable sources, I gathered a picture of what Pradeep had done with Kamala's money. Although local gossip implied he had wasted much of what she remitted, a closer look revealed considerable thrift and business acumen. Caroline and Kamala independently confirmed that one year of Kamala's salary went to pay back the loan taken to finance her job. Caroline noted that Pradeep purchased a small cinnamon garden for about Rs. 25 000/ (U.S.$500, or roughly five months' salary). With two months' salary Kamala purchased a sophisticated cassette player that she sent to Pradeep in Sri Lanka. Perhaps the greatest source of tension was Pradeep's loan of a further 13 months' salary (Rs. 65 000/ or U.S.$1300) to a female neighbour woman of the Berava caste, who promised to pay it back but in early 1994 showed no signs of doing so. Village rumour (perhaps inevitably) suggested a sexual connection as well.

While indiscriminate gifts of money to a low-caste lover hardly count as a wise investment of money from the Middle East, the discrete and deliberate acquisition of property through outstanding debt has a long history in the village. Halaagama with financial resources have for over 30 years extended loans to those with little prospects of repaying them, in the hope of procuring the mortgaged land deed in exchange. In January 1995 Siri wrote in a letter that Pradeep had taken the deed for the Berava woman's house and land as collateral for the Rs. 65 000/, and had given the neighbour and her elderly parents until the end of 1995 to move out. Their land conveniently bordered the cinnamon land Pradeep had purchased several years earlier. Only one in a long series of caste-based land exchanges related to migration, Pradeep's

transaction, if successful, would displace a Berava family of considerable standing and wealth, driven into debt by the reckless spending habits of their son-in-law.

Depending on the success of Pradeep's land takeover,[33] using purely material criteria, Pradeep's investments may qualify the family as one that "got developed" through migration. Pradeep continued to work while his wife was away, seldom turning to drink, and his demeanour in no way suggested a threat from his working wife to his masculine self-image. However, Kamala's estranged relations with her natal family and her suicide attempt reveal serious costs to Kamala and her family network when she felt she did not share a say in the use and distribution of the money she remitted. Although they may rank as "developed" in the future, the internal struggle for control over Kamala's money nearly tore her body and her family apart.

Five years after Ranjani's husband appropriated the fruits of Ranjani's labour, Kamala faced a similar situation. Well educated,[34] young, independent and spirited, Kamala still faced nearly insurmountable resistance to her efforts to control her own money. Alienated from her natal family and prohibited by her husband from returning to the Middle East, Kamala arguably fared even worse than her older counterpart Ranjani. Perhaps the rising expectations of young village women lead them to chafe more at the gendered restrictions imposed by their families. This case in particular gives one pause to consider whether the changes in the village have been to the benefit of women.

Simon and Chandrika: Accountability in the Reverse Direction

Having presented two cases where female migrants struggled with their spouses over control of the money they remitted, I now turn to a case where a male migrant sent his earnings home to his wife. During her husband Simon's absence, Chandrika controlled both her own salary and the money he sent her every month. Upon his return, Simon held Chandrika accountable for her use of his money in a way neither Ranjani nor Kamala could hold their husbands.

One of only six village men to work in the Middle East, Simon spent eight years as an exterminator in Saudi Arabia. Simon remitted much of his considerable salary of Rs. 11 000/ a month[35] to his wife Chandrika. Among the best educated in the village, Simon had completed his A-levels (the Sri Lankan equivalent of high school) while his wife Chandrika held a bachelor's degree from a private school in Colombo. Leaving their young son with Simon's sister, Chandrika commuted to work at an import-export firm in Colombo, supervising the construction of their new house in her free time.

With Simon living abroad, Chandrika held considerable power and authority in the village. Able to trace her descent back to the original foundress nine generations earlier, Chandrika inherited both HH status and land in the heart of Kosgahakanda, near the temple and in the oldest and wealthiest neighbour-

hood of the village. Simon's family, also HH caste, held land in the area too. Chandrika gave generously and often to religious and secular festivals. Upon his return from Saudi Arabia, Simon stepped into a leadership role befitting one of his caste and wealth; until his return, Chandrika, acting as his proxy, not only headed her own household but also influenced village decisions in his stead. Empowered in his absence, Chandrika lost much of her authority when her husband returned.

My research assistant Sita and I spent a leisurely afternoon in April 1993 talking with Chandrika as she supervised bricklaying at her new house.[36] Started in 1991, the large structure occupied land given to Chandrika by her mother. Various items of furniture and household appliances, such as a refrigerator, a television set and a pump for filling an overhead tank to supply running water to the house, were stored at Simon's family home. Chandrika thought that when fully constructed, the house would be worth about Rs. 300 000/ (U.S.$6000 at 1994 rates), not including furniture.

Ebullient over plans to purchase a bus with his savings, Simon returned from Saudi Arabia in July 1993. Disappointed with the slow progress on the house, he began to question his wife concerning her use of the money he had remitted. Things came to a head between Simon and Chandrika in October 1993 with a loud and violent fight. Sita, who lived across the road and heard the argument, told me some of the details. Saying that he had remitted Rs. 250 000/ (U.S.$5000 by 1994 exchange rates) to Sri Lanka since he started working in the Middle East, Simon demanded to know what Chandrika had done with the money and why she had failed to finish their house. Further, he wanted to know what had become of three gold chains and a pair of gold ear studs, altogether worth another Rs. 50 000/ (U.S.$1000). Chandrika's response, that Simon should not ask about "past things," prompted his reply, "Without asking about past things, I have nothing to say in the present. Now, what have you done with the money and the jewelry?" Simon showed his sister his accounts, lamenting that he could find no trace of the money he had sent home, and that his wife not only refused to talk about the money but also refused to cook his meals. Sita said Simon then "got damned wild with Chandrika" and hit her. Crying and screaming, Chandrika shouted that she did not want him as a husband anymore, and threatened to jump into the well. Simon's sister restrained her from this suicide attempt.

Drawn by the noise, several neighbours gathered in the road. Approaching the arguing couple, Sita told Simon and Chandrika that it was not educated to shout at each other in that fashion. Chandrika said Simon had struck her. Sita replied that all husbands were like that and recommended that Chandrika tell Simon what she had done with the money. Chandrika again attempted to run away, saying that she would kill herself. Stopped by her sister-in-law, she

amended her statement, saying she would first kill Simon and then kill herself. Sita stooped to comfort Chandrika's screaming six-year-old son.

Later I asked Sita what she thought had become of the money. Chandrika, who continued with her own job when Simon went abroad, had told Sita that she saved all the money Simon remitted in a bank account, using her own salary to maintain her family. In retrospect, Sita suspected Chandrika had been lying. Chandrika had lent a great deal of money to various people, many of whom had not paid her back. In particular, Sita thought Chandrika had covered a debt of about Rs. 50 000/ (U.S.$1000) for a sister, loaning even more to a jobless brother.

In Sita's opinion, Chandrika stood answerable for her use of Simon's money. Although just, such accountability rarely applied equally to men and women; in the numerous case studies with which I am familiar, I never found an instance of a husband beaten by his returnee wife when she found he had wasted her money. By contrast, Sita (and numerous other village women) found Simon's violent assault well within the range of appropriate masculine behaviour. In the cases of Kamala and Chandrika, both women, whether accuser (Kamala) or accused (Chandrika), threatened or attempted suicide to express their emotional displeasure and distress. Kamala swallowed poison in her frustration and rage, as Chandrika threatened to jump in the well in her panic and (possibly) guilt. In both cases, village cultural habits channelled women's violent emotions inward against their own bodies, instead of outward against their husbands. Kamala attempted suicide because Pradeep wasted her money; Chandrika threatened suicide because she wasted Simon's money. Both women turned violence against themselves in an effort to express anger against their husbands.

While village culture condemned violence, drunkenness and wasting money, sanctions against women far exceeded sanctions against men. Tacit approval of self-centred and unrestricted male behaviour contrasted markedly with the restraint and control required of women. Despite Chandrika's high status in the village, her education, job and control of family money, she stood at a disadvantage in her struggle with Simon. Cultural habits held her accountable for not wasting her husband's money and also legitimated his physical assault.

The new meaning attributed to women's work affected not only gender relations but also patterns of family and caste association. In a close-knit kin community relatives claimed mutual access to assets, and family obligations operated to "level out" differences in material and economic well-being. Those who accumulated significant assets without redistributing their wealth to poorer relatives made choices about which of their kin ties to sustain on their way up the ladder and which of their ties to abandon. The continuation and abrogation of kin ties had direct impact on shifts in caste and subcaste

relations. Representing a division of caste by wealth, the highest grade in the Halaagama caste retained only those who maintained social standing and wealth; poorer relatives and families who lost respectability through "incorrect" marriages dropped to the lower grade. All villagers strove to maintain "far" kin links with rich and respectable relatives, while distancing themselves from associations with poorer but "closer" relations.[37] As women negotiated their relations with the person or people who saved and spent the money they remitted to Sri Lanka, they also challenged and changed relations fundamental to family and village.

In a society dependent on the extended kinship system, many people had claims on money migrants earned. Ranjani, Kamala and Chandrika fought bitterly with their husbands over who had control over the fruits of labour abroad. In all three cases, the men sought to consolidate remittances by investing in a house. The violence Sarath and Pradeep deployed to try to separate their wives from their families, and Simon's rage over Chandrika's gifts, could be read in two ways; although conforming to classical definitions of abusive and controlling husbands, it also indicated an awareness of the risks of becoming too firmly enmeshed in a large and impoverished extended family. Kamala broke with her family but kept her husband (and thus indirectly the money he appropriated from her). Ranjani broke with her husband but kept her family, implicitly consenting to the bonds of kinship that demanded all of her earnings be spent for family consumption. In a kin group of such size and poverty, distribution of remittances results in a levelling down of the migrant's social position. Ranjani firmly vowed that "this time" she would save enough money to put up a house. It remains to be seen if that will be accomplished.

Unmarried Migrants

While in the previous section I examined relations between migrants and their spouses, in this section I focus on relations between unmarried women and their natal families. Examining accountability, co-operation and access to money, I explore the impact of wage-earning on marriage arrangements and gender transformations in the family and village.

Although the majority of women migrating from the village were married, a significant minority of unmarried women also went abroad to work. Many with conservative opinions about the advisable roles and activities of unmarried "girls" counselled against work in the Middle East, claiming that a respectable family arranging a marriage for their son would retract a proposal if they discovered the woman had worked as a housemaid or as a factory worker in the Colombo Free Trade Zone. A number of fathers with adult, unmarried daughters emphatically condemned out of hand all jobs requiring extended stays away from home.

More pragmatic villagers noted that a woman returning from abroad with significant savings offered as a dowry had little difficulty finding eligible suitors. In the presence of money, and in the absence of proof of immodest sexual behaviour abroad, good arranged marriages for unmarried migrants often created permanent upward mobility for their families. As more women, both married and unmarried, ventured abroad, and as villagers of all castes and statuses became more familiar with the phenomenon, the stigma attached to migration decreased.

Claiming that parents often wasted less money than husbands, Milton, a local subagent, thought that unmarried women often fared better than married ones when they migrated. Although educated parents especially looked after their daughters' fortunes, Milton noted that educated families sent few women abroad. Only poor and uneducated people with poor and uneducated daughters took the Middle East option. While my research confirmed Milton's statement by showing that wealthy, educated, HH families sent no women (married or otherwise) abroad, many of the unmarried migrants of poorer families had done well in school, and their work often improved the family living situation immensely.

Remitting to Fathers: Premasiri's Daughters

Siri and I found Premasiri sitting in the dappled morning shade on the cement border that surrounded his spacious, five-room, tile-roof house, peeling cinnamon for a local landholder. He and his 18-year-old youngest son, who scraped the hard, green, outer layer off the sticks before his father stripped them of their rich, red, inner bark, welcomed our interview wholeheartedly as a chance to chat while working. The family was considered by many villagers to be much "improved" through migration to the Middle East: three of Premasiri's five daughters had worked abroad, with two leaving before they married and all three remitting their money to their parents. A tall, lean man in his 50s with greying hair, Premasiri said that he took good care of the money his daughters sent from the Middle East, declaring that he had not wasted any of it, "Not even five cents."[38]

Premasiri's family (HKK) bought their land from a Berava family in the early 1960s. Until 1988 they lived in a small house, which they enlarged and improved. In 1988 they paid to bring an electricity line down the road to their house, a luxury few except the wealthiest in Kosgahakanda could afford. Recently they added several rooms on the back side, and removed and replaced the roof. In 1993, they constructed a carpentry workshop at the back of the property. Premasiri's daughter Lalita's husband needed electric tools for his work, but the house where he lived had no power lines.

The first in her family and one of the first in the village to go to the Middle East, Lalita, Premasiri's third child, spent nearly six years abroad. Paying an

agency only Rs. 675/ (approximately U.S.$40) in 1978 for a job in Dubai, U.A.E., she earned Rs. 3200/ (approximately U.S.$200)[39] a month. Eighteen years old and unmarried when she left, Lalita stayed abroad for three and a half years. With the money Lalita remitted to a bank account in her mother's name, her family bought two acres of cinnamon land. Well tended, the land lucratively supported a family. By peeling their own cinnamon, Premasiri and his son earned even more per acre than other landed proprietors who had to share their profits with their peelers. Premasiri's cinnamon estate adjoins that of several wealthy HH caste Kosgahakanda landlords.

After her return from Dubai, Lalita spent two years in Jordan, receiving a free ticket from her sister Sita, then also working abroad. Lalita made Rs. 3000/ (approximately U.S.$125 at the 1981 exchange rate) per month, for a total of Rs. 76 000/ (approximately U.S.$3150 at the 1981 exchange rate).[40] Anticipating her return, Premasiri and his wife arranged a marriage. They chose a hard-working young man who had done some carpentry for the family. The boy's mother was from the Para caste (Pariah or Untouchable), his father HH. The Para shadow on his social standing matched the intimation of disrespectability from Lalita's years abroad. At the same time, his industry and work ethic recommended him, as her dowry recommended her. Despite their daughter's wealth, Premasiri and his wife chose a hard-working son-in-law of mixed caste, rather than making a higher-status but less-skilled match. Their choice indicates that they value employment and future financial security over an increase in caste status.

Lalita received Rs. 40 000/ (approximately U.S.$1670 at 1983 exchange rates) in cash and Rs. 20 000/ (approximately U.S.$830) worth of jewelry and furniture as a dowry from her parents, or about 80 percent of the money she earned abroad on her second trip. Premasiri reminisced about the wedding ceremony, which went on for five days and cost nearly Rs. 75 000/ (approximately U.S.$3125). Both the size of the dowry and the magnificence of the ceremony and following celebrations enhanced the status of the new couple and their families.

I did not ask about ownership of the two acres of cinnamon land bought with Lalita's wages from her first job abroad, but I believe Premasiri held it in his name. Whether Lalita would inherit it after her parents' death or whether it would be split equally between the siblings remained to be seen. Whatever the arrangement, it seemed to please all parties, judging from the high degree of co-operation in the family; they roofed Lalita's husband's new carpentry workshop, built on Premasiri's property, with tin sheets salvaged from an old house of Lalita's sister Mangali, also working abroad. Money and goods seemed to flow in abundance between family members, without an exact tally of worth and debt. Premasiri's investments ensured enough wealth for all those in his extended family, also making him a patron to some of his poorer relatives.

Mangali, Premasiri's eldest daughter, went abroad in 1987, after her arranged marriage, leaving her husband and one-year-old daughter to live with her parents. Her work in Lebanon disrupted by the war, Mangali returned home, purchased a ticket and went to Jordan to work as an attendant in a private hospital, earning roughly $200 a month. She sent her money to her parents, who bought a block of land with a house from a drummer family in Polwatta, and replaced the coconut-frond roof with tin sheets.[41] Mangali's husband, who had no job of his own and lived with her parents, had a series of arguments with his in-laws, left his children and took up with another woman. Premasiri described several fist- and knife-fights, and waxed poetic on "that useless dog," claiming his son-in-law had started working for an illicit liquor brewer and had sold kasippu out of the new house in Polwatta until they evicted him.

Of the money Mangali had remitted, Premasiri said he had spent over Rs. 100 000/ (U.S.$2000 at 1994 exchange rates) to build a new cement house on Mangali's property, still unfinished. Having returned briefly to Sri Lanka, Mangali again went abroad as a housemaid, remitting her salary every three months to her parents. Keeping most of the money in the bank, Premasiri said he used some of her earnings to feed Mangali's child and to continue construction of the new house. With a good cement house and money in the bank, Mangali would be able to remarry, or remain single, as she saw fit.

Premasiri's family did very well sending women to work abroad. With Lalita's income, they purchased two acres of cinnamon land, putting them among the largest landholders in the village area. By financing jobs with family money, Premasiri's daughters never fell into debt to the moneylenders, but kept their profits in the family. The family prospered and grew closer by following Premasiri's lead; however, Mangali's husband broke ties with the family. Jobless and without authority, he rebelled against the rule of his father-in-law. Perhaps feeling emasculated by his dependent position, he, like Rukmini's husband Ramesh, turned to alcohol and alcohol production. Abandoning his share of his wife's upcoming fortune and severing all bonds with her family, at the time of my field work he lived with his second wife and harassed his mother for money. Control over women's remittances affected not only male-female relations in the village, but also male-male relations. While Premasiri's status as a patron rose markedly with his control of his daughters' wealth, his doubly disenfranchised son-in-law lost standing twice, first with respect to his employed wife and second with respect to the father-in-law managing the money.

Mahinda's Elopement: Women Marrying Men of Their Own Choice

While women with good relationships with their families often profited by allowing their parents to arrange a marriage for them, women who chafed

against their parents' authority found freedom through choosing their own mates. Unmarried migrants at odds with their parents or not receptive to arranged marriages either eloped with men of their own choice or renounced matrimony entirely. Their financial independence gave them more authority in making their decisions.

In mid-January 1993 Mahinda, the eldest son of a poor HKK family in Kosgahakanda, eloped with a neighbour's niece. Her father, hoping for a better match for his daughter who had just returned from the Middle East, chased the couple, trying to catch them before they had "lived as husband and wife" and separate them by force. Having hoped to arrange a marriage for Mahinda, his family also disapproved of the love match.

Several days after the elopement, my research assistant Siri met Mahinda at the junction in the evening. Offering him a cigarette and calling him a bridegroom, Siri asked what business brought Mahinda to the market area. Sitting astride his bicycle and checking frequently over his shoulder, Mahinda replied that he had sent a message to his mother and feared that his father might intercept it and come in her stead. Legally married, the new husband and wife had accepted an invitation to dinner at Mahinda's father-in-law's house. To keep their self-respect, they felt they needed to arrive at the house by car, but, after a small wedding party and registration fees, they had exhausted all of their money. To hire a car, Mahinda asked money in secret from his mother. Later that evening Siri saw mother and son talking and money change hands.

When I interviewed Mahinda a month later, his wife had found another job abroad. Borrowing Rs. 13 000/ (approximately U.S.$290 at 1993 exchange rates) to pay the job agent, she left to work for two years as a housemaid in Kuwait. Mahinda said that his wife's parents had used all of the money she earned abroad, wasting much of it. "She had nothing left when I got her," he said, except for Rs. 3000/ (approximately U.S.$67) that they spent on the wedding. Before they married, she had told Mahinda she planned to go back to the Middle East. Until his wife returned, Mahinda planned to stay with his parents.

Later I asked Siri why the couples' respective parents were so upset with the love match. Noting that when an unmarried daughter goes to the Middle East her parents take out loans for her, Siri suggested that the bride's parents expect to use some of her money for house development or land purchase in exchange. A daughter should only marry after giving money to her parents. In addition to the money issue, Siri noted that Mahinda had no steady job, and neither bride nor groom owned property. Observing the couple's youth, Siri predicted a dearth of long-distance planning and asked, "What do they know about the world?"

Not having spoken with Mahinda's wife or in-laws, I cannot speculate on the justice of Mahinda's claims that they wasted her money. Whatever the

prior situation, Mahinda's bride found herself in the unenviable position of starting afresh, taking loans to finance her third job abroad rather than using her savings to pay the agency. During the year following her departure, Mahinda held no steady job, but spent his time with another young migrant's husband, telling jokes and smoking cigarettes at the junction. Neither man's wife sent him money during that time, though both husbands accrued considerable debts they promised their wives would repay. Mahinda's wife escaped what she must have seen as the trap of her parents' control by marrying, thus ensuring she could manage her own money. At the same time, future relations with her husband, especially those pertaining to administering her money, remained open to negotiation.

While Mahinda's wife chafed at parental control, Premasiri's daughters did very well by letting their father control their remittances. Mahinda's wife married a penniless, jobless young man without her parents' permission. In contrast, Premasiri and his wife arranged good marriages for their daughters, ensuring that their husbands had good jobs and stable characters. While Mahinda's wife had no assets to her name when she went abroad for her third job, Premasiri's daughters had all acquired houses and land. In Premasiri's daughter Mangali's case, where a proposed marriage failed, her father continued to look after his daughter's finances, child and house. By marrying for love, Mahinda's wife renounced her claims to all such help from both her parents and his. In these cases as in others, "getting developed" depended not only on the industry of the migrant, but also on the wise investments of the people at home receiving and managing her remittances. While a family working in harmony could work miracles with the incoming money, women from families at odds with each other found it difficult to control their money and "improve."

Fleeing: Other Motives and Meanings for Migration

Although many migrants worked abroad purely for the money, others left the village because of the "push" of their social situation at home or the "pull" of new destinations. In the following two cases, I examine alternative motivations for migration, above and beyond the wish to "get developed."

Dreaming of Travel: Shriyani in Austria

Of all the village women with whom I spoke, Shriyani was the only one to say that she had gone abroad primarily in order to see new places, meet new people and learn new languages. Ever since she was 15 it had been her dream to travel. An unmarried middle daughter in a family of seven, Shriyani worked as a housemaid in Pakistan for four years. She then went to Jordan, where she worked for a year and a half. In February 1993 she left Jordan to go to Vienna, Austria, to work first as a housemaid and later as a nursing-home assistant.

Shriyani's parents had recently purchased and renovated a three-bedroom, cement house with a tiled roof. Their large garden contained numerous unusual plants and they had a well and a toilet (both signs of affluence in the village area) on the property. The house had electricity, and Shriyani had brought a large television to complete the lavishly furnished living room. Unusually dressed in white cotton pajamas and a blue and white bathrobe, Shriyani spoke with Sita and me at length, in English, when she came home for the New Year holiday in April 1994. The most significant festival of the Sinhala year, New Year saw many migrants returning to the village for at least a month's vacation.[42]

Shriyani came the closest of any village woman with whom I talked to voicing what might be called explicitly feminist ideas. Describing herself as "a lot like a man," Shriyani said that she did the adventurous, away-from-home things that men often did, that her hair was short, that she preferred to wear trousers. Because people in Sri Lanka "had different ideas," she tried to tell them what life in Austria was like. For instance, her mother often told Shriyani not to walk alone in the village. Shriyani said that even before she went abroad she thought such rules were "nonsense" and she often fought with her parents about them. Elaborating on her masculine skills, Shriyani mentioned that in high school she captained the debate team and, as a child, she used to ride a bicycle (an activity reserved largely for men). I asked if she could swim, and she replied, "Yeah, sure." Most village women (and even some men) could not. In Austria, despite hard work and racism, she found a freedom and acceptance unattainable in the village.

Remitting most of her surplus salary to her parents in the village, Shriyani portrayed herself as a selfless daughter. While in Austria, Shriyani dreamed that her parents had died. Feeling afraid, she wanted to return home immediately. She claimed she worked hard not for personal riches, but to provide her family with enough that they need not suffer. In her youth, Shriyani remembered that her parents always saved her a bit of food to eat before school, even if it meant that her father himself had to go hungry.[43] Unlike some of the greedy Sri Lankans she had met in Austria, Shriyani said that she did not want much for herself; she wanted her family to be able to live without borrowing from anyone.

Looking over her shoulder and remarking that it was good her parents spoke no English, Shriyani told Sita and me that she planned to stay in Europe for the rest of her life. Thinking she slept, her parents had discussed arranging a good marriage for her in Sri Lanka. They were anxious because she was nearly 28 years old. Without explicitly telling them her long-term plans, she later assured her parents, "I'll take care of myself, don't worry." Caught between Sri Lanka and Austria, Shriyani felt she could no longer consider marrying a Sri Lankan man or settling down in the village. Although Shriyani's

family had certainly "gotten developed" through her and her sister's work abroad, Shriyani's migration experiences abroad made her prefer a semi-permanent, voluntary exile from the land of her birth. Despite her love for her family, the values of female independence that attracted Shriyani to Europe in the first place left her few viable options to settle in the village.

Burnt and Beaten: Winitha's Escape

Unaddressed in formal accounts of migration, flight from domestic violence motivated a number of village women in their choice to seek employment in the Middle East. In a number of cases, women deserted during their time abroad by their husbands found relief, not tragedy, in the end of their marriages. Despite the difficulties of living alone, they felt their new independence preferable. Official pronouncements and national news items about the adverse effect of migration on marital unions rarely took into account the pre-migration quality of the relationship.

One day in late December 1992, when Siri, his wife Telsie and I were returning along a back road from Siri's cinnamon estate, a woman with a small child in her arms approached us tentatively and asked Siri if he would read to her a postcard in English from a Colombo job agency, which informed her that she had been selected for the post of housemaid and that she should come to the agency immediately. Winitha had four children, the youngest just over a year old. She had been in Kuwait when the Gulf War broke out, and, although she had managed to pay off her loan, she returned with absolutely nothing else, "Not even a dress or a biscuit for my children." As she told us this story, she started to cry.

On our way home, Siri told me that Winitha's husband, Sunil, could peel cinnamon but instead worked with the local illicit liquor producer and spent a great deal on alcohol while his children went hungry. Siri and Telsie speculated on two motivations for Winitha's migration: to alleviate poverty and to escape a husband who drank and hit her. Telsie, who taught Winitha's eldest daughter at the local school, claimed to have seen burn marks on Winitha's arms where her husband had hit her with the firewood from the cooking hearth. Siri said that most nights the children stayed at the house next door for fear of the father and Winitha stayed with her sister in a nearby village. With no money for herself, no food for her children and problems from her husband, migration to the Middle East represented Winitha's best option.

Several days after meeting her on the road, I spoke with Winitha about her upcoming job as a housemaid in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. Winitha planned to stay abroad for three or four years, hoping to pay back her loan and then earn enough money to build a new house. The packed-earth floor of the damp clay house where she lived got muddy when the land flooded in the monsoon season. Keeping most of her wages in the bank, Winitha expected to send some

money to her husband's mother, who would look after her four children while Winitha worked abroad. Asked what her husband Sunil thought of her new job, Winitha replied quietly that, although he anticipated money with pleasure, two days earlier he had gotten very drunk and broken all the ceramic cooking pots in the house. Winitha made some polite gestures for us to please speak softly and change the subject; Sunil, drunk on the bed in his front room, could overhear our conversation even from the front entrance of the neighbour's house where we sat talking.

Winitha went abroad in February 1993, and during my stay in the village, she sent a number of large checks home. Siri reported that in late May 1993, Winitha sent Rs. 11 600/ (approximately U.S.$230) to her brother-in-law, a reliable painter, asking him to repay some of her loans. Sunil went with him to Colombo to cash the check and they fought over the money. The brother-in-law gave Sunil all the money except a small sum he needed to cover his expenses for travel and buy something for the children. Instead of settling with the moneylenders, Sunil purchased eight or nine bottles of arrack and drank with his friends.[44] Telsie mentioned that by October, Winitha's daughters no longer attended school. In January 1994 a relative of Winitha's said that she had recently sent Rs. 13 000/ (approximately U.S.$260). One of Sunil's friends went with Sunil to change the money. He gave Sunil Rs. 4000/ (U.S.$80) and gambled with the rest. The loans still had not been repaid in full and all four children, sick with fever, needed worm medicine. Since Sunil rarely gave his mother money to take care of his children, Sunil's sisters' families provided as best they could. When I left Sri Lanka in April 1994, the situation remained unchanged.

Women migrated to the Middle East with a variety of different motivations. In Winitha's case, the need to leave was greater even than the goal of earning money for land and a house. In the Middle East, women were sometimes confronted with gruelling labour, beatings, burns, even rape. But many found work abroad safer than the village, where they might face similar treatment; paradoxically, the Middle East provided them a refuge from the home. Although some felt Winitha had abandoned her children to a fearful and hungry existence, she had succeeded in saving herself from the same. The money she remitted to the village had not yet gone towards rebuilding the house as she had hoped, but Winitha had successfully accomplished several of her main objectives merely by leaving. Never confronting her husband directly or challenging his authority, she nevertheless curtailed his power over herself by leaving, sending back money she hoped would, at least in part, benefit her children.

Gender Transformations

In these case studies, I try to show through women's own stories how they contest power relations in the village. "Even so, readers should not mistake these representations of others' speech for the actual presence of other voices in this text, any more than they should regard the stories themselves as unmediated and disinterested accounts of 'real' experience" (Steedly 1993:37). In choosing stories to relate I call on both the exemplary and the extraordinary, trying to create a narrative impression of both the taken-for-granted world and of instances where contention questions and challenges established behavioural patterns in the village.

Images of women have literally changed through their migration. In the midst of our interview, Premasiri sent his son to fetch a large, framed picture of one of his daughters, taken in a Jordanian studio, posed with a backdrop of Grecian columns. Before the burgeoning of the labour migration to the Middle East, nearly all the large studio photographs found in village houses depicted couples on their wedding day, with smaller snapshots capturing the wedding ceremony and celebrations. In 1994, most migrants' houses contained a photo album, often filled with scenes from abroad: housemaids in veils and long dresses, smiling Arabic children, foreign houses and exotic landscapes. Sent from abroad to make the strange familiar, these pictures occupied the same physical space as marriage photos in village houses. The photographs from the Middle East, however, emphasized a woman's work instead of her marriage, picturing her as an individual in service, not as half of a couple.

This article notes that transformations in gender relations do not necessarily correlate in predictable ways with social change and questions the subtly persistent assumption that change always happens for the better. Migration provides the economic wherewithal for women to stake claims (albeit rigorously contested) to status and decision-making power by revaluing women's work. Although migration has revolutionized earning patterns in the village, nonetheless, money continues to flow largely through male hands and, although migration allows women to escape untenable home situations, their escape does little to challenge the larger village structures of ideological and physical violence that subjugate them. New meanings and values arising from female migration abroad contest with unequal relationships embedded in older village categories.

Villagers negotiate not only their standing in the prestige system, but also which system of prestige to join at any one time among the many operating simultaneously in the village. Tacking back and forth between older and newer forms of power and authority, migrants and their families seek to maximize their own rank and standing. Both the players and the playing field shift regularly in the village status arena. Using multiple hierarchies and multiple methods to evaluate standing, villagers joust for status in many different arenas

simultaneously; gender hierarchies are enmeshed within systems of kinship, religion, caste and wealth. Social change and mobility depend not only on progress and development within a given system, but also on the relative dominance of different competing systems in the village. Individuals and families position themselves with respect to the multiple, intersecting identities and oppressions, searching to find, and to legitimate, the system offering them the most upward (or the least downward) mobility.

Holding a series of priorities in mind, women migrants set forth not only to "get developed" by earning money for a house and land, but also to feed their families, earn dowries, see the world and sometimes to escape abusive husbands and dominating fathers. Rarely do women explicitly voice expectations of increased individual power and authority as motivations for their migration. Embedded in their families, women's "development" depends in large part upon the investments of the relative receiving the money she remits from abroad. Until many path-breakers legitimate roles for independent women in the village, each migrant will strive anew to carve out her own sphere of influence within the enmeshing power structures of her own family.

Co-operation and struggles between husbands and wives, parents and daughters, reveal sites of collaboration and contestation, as the changing dynamics of women's work give them increased say in team efforts, as well as increased leverage in confronting pre-existent, hierarchical gender structures. Multiple arenas of negotiation and contestation over power and identity surround migration in Kosgahakanda. Sri Lanka's "army of housemaids" fight innumerable individual battles, as women negotiate an acceptable new gender hierarchy within a changing social sphere.

Notes

1. This research was made possible in part by NSF grant number DBS 9207143. Special thanks are due to Bridget Hayden and Lessie Jo Frazier for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this article.
2. The outmigration represents 2.7 percent of the national population of 18 million persons. See Herath (1993) and Wansekara (1993).
3. I have used pseudonyms for both village and individuals in an effort to protect the privacy of the people with whom I worked.
4. Fourty-eight out of 161 households contained current or returned migrants.
5. Sinhala speakers distinguish between long and short soundings of seven vowels. I represent long vowels by doubling the short vowel symbols: "i" is a short vowel similar to that in American English "bit"; "ii" is similar to the vowel in the English "deed"; "e" is halfway between the English "bet" and "bait," but without the glide found in "bait"; "ee" is similar to the vowel in "raid," again without the glide; "ae" and "aeae" are similar to the vowel in "cat." I use the symbol "*a*" for the vowel sound similar to the last vowel in "sofa"; the corresponding long vowel, "*aa*," is rarely found in Sinhala, except in the occasional English loan-word, where it sounds like the vowel in "bird"; "a" is like the vowel in "hot," while "aa" sounds like the first vowel in "father"; "u" is like the vowel in "shoot" but shorter and without the glide, while "uu" sounds like the vowel in "food," but again without the glide;

"o" is similar to the vowel sound in "coat," but shorter and without the glide; "oo" sounds like the vowel in "load," without the glide.

Many of the consonants in Sinhala correspond to those used in American English. However, Sinhala-speakers distinguish between two "T-like" and two "D-like" sounds. I use "T" to represent a sound pronounced just slightly further back in the mouth than the first consonant in the English "taxi." I use "t" to represent a dental-stop consonant pronounced with the tongue positioned for the first consonant in the English "thin," but without the passage of air. Similarly, the voiced sound "D" corresponds with the first consonant in "dog," pronounced in the same place as "T," with the tongue slightly further back in the mouth; "d" is pronounced in the same place as "t," with the tongue just behind the upper teeth. Sinhala speakers also distinguish between "full nasals" and "half nasals" or "pre-nasals." The full nasals "m," "n" and "ng" correspond to the first consonants in the English "mood" and "noon" and the "ng" in "sing." The half-nasals "*m̆*," "*n̆*," and "*nğ*" occur only before the voiced stop consonants "b," "d," "D" and "g" and are kept short and released quickly. Finally, Sinhala speakers note a difference between single and double consonants; "kk" is pronounced as in the English "bookkeeper."

I have transliterated personal and place names according to the most common traditional conventions, which do not always correspond to the orthography I have set out here.

6. For more on caste relations in the village, see below, pp. 52-53.
7. *Diyunu une naeae.*
8. *"Nikaṅg innavaa, bonavaa, naasti karaṅnavaa."*
9. *"PoDi karaṅnavaa, naasti karaṅnavaa, bonavaa."*
10. *"Nikaṅg innavaa, bonavaa, naasti karaṅnavaa."*
11. I found out in January 1995 that Rukmini had indeed returned to the Middle East.
12. *"Hari pavu, araabi indala aeviillaa (eheemma) innavaa."*
13. This style of drinking was also prevalent among some Westernized élites; I once attended a dinner party where I learned that respectable unmarried women rarely lingered at such functions past seven or eight in the evening. While their wives huddled together in one room, married and unmarried men drank bottle after bottle in another, until, nearing ten or eleven in the evening, the host decided to serve dinner. Immediately upon eating, the visitors departed, mostly in cars driven by drunken guests.
14. See Winitha's case, below.
15. In 1993, a bottle of the officially distilled arrack cost Rs. 118/, while a labourer's daily wage was between Rs. 100/ and Rs. 125/. A bottle of kasippu, a fruit, yeast and sugar-based fractionally distilled moonshine, cost about Rs. 60/.
16. *"Course ivara da?"*
17. In the village where everyone knew all the gossip about everyone else, there was not even the hint of a rumour suggesting that Lal might be actively homosexual. Several other men were known to be so.
18. I interviewed Lal on October 31, 1993; the J.P. and *Graamaseevaka* interviewed him on November 3, 1993. I do not discount the possibility that some information inadvertently divulged by Siri or myself prompted the village notables to inquire into Lal's personal life.
19. In Sri Lankan English, "peon" carries much less of the derogatory tone it has in American English. An office peon runs errands, makes tea, sorts mail and performs other menial tasks.
20. *"Gini penellin baeta kaapu miniha kanamaediriyaTat bayayi."*
21. *"Savahaal dana shaalaava."*
22. *"Pansala"* and *"deevaalaya."*
23. *"Pin."*
24. See G. Gamburd (1972:354) for more on rank changes through prestations at ceremonies.
25. Assuming Chandradasa and Indrani were probably funding the construction, Siri speculated that the house would pass back to Lal's brother's family after Lal's death.

26. Kamala Peiris quotes her statistics from CENWOR, *U.N. Decade for Women: Progress and Achievements of Women in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Karunaratne and Sons).
27. See James Scott (1990:52-55) for more on euphemisms. Like any unbalanced diet, consumption of a language deficient in women supports an entity that legitimates their exclusion (see Bourdieu 1991).
28. *Balu paeTav daana geyak vagee.*
29. Sarath sold the house, land and Rs. 30 000/ worth of unused building materials for a mere Rs. 70 000/ (approximately U.S.$2000 at 1988 exchange rates).
30. Sarath bought the new house for Rs. 47 000/ (about U.S.$1350 at 1988 exchange rates).
31. Sarath sold the second house for Rs. 30 000/ (about U.S.$850 at 1988 exchange rates) to a woman who had been working in the Middle East.
32. "*KivvaTa tarahaa venna epaa; maTa aaranchi unaa Kamalaa-nangi vaha biuvvaa kiyalaa.*" "Don't get angry when I say this" is a common preface for slightly too personal a personal question.
33. In June 1995 Sita wrote to say that the neighbour had pawned the same land deed twice, once to Pradeep and once to a HKK boutique owner. It was unclear who held the legal rights to the land.
34. Kamala completed her O-level (10th grade) exams, which take place after 10 years of schooling in the British and Sri Lankan system. This educational level put Kamala within the "well-educated" bracket in the village.
35. 550 Saudi riyals, or about U.S.$220.
36. In Sri Lanka custom dictates that a family member must supervise all hired workers to ensure diligence and prevent theft.
37. For more on this topic, see G. Gamburd (1972:308 ff.).
38. *Sata pahakvat naeae.* In his story, Premasiri presents himself as the major maker of decisions. Since I did not speak with his wife, I do not know how great a role she might have played.
39. At the 1978 exchange rate, I estimate Lalita's salary at about $200 a month, or double what most maids made in 1994. Agency fees of Rs. 675/ or $40 then now compare at fees of Rs. 13 500/ or $270, nearly seven times as great.
40. At the 1981 exchange rate, I estimate her salary at about $125 a month. Her savings amount to about $3150.
41. The land cost 12 000/ (U.S.$400 at 1989 exchange rates) and they spent 25 000/ (U.S.$830 at 1989 exchange rates) on house repairs.
42. During the same time period, many men indulged in gambling, drinking and fighting.
43. Sinhalese families eat in ranked stages, starting with the father, the male children, the female children and ending with the mother. In poor families, adult women go hungry more often than other people. In some families adult men put children before them, but for Shriyani's father to have gone hungry when his daughter ate represented a large sacrifice in local terms. Dr. Malsiri Dias writes, "Within a poor household with decreasing food supplies, the wife/mother would have had no alternative except to cut back on the dietary intake of the family or seek means of supplementing the family resources. Culturally, it was not only her responsibility to cook the meals but also to serve them. As the last person to eat, depleted food stocks would have led to certain sacrifices on her part" (Dias and Weerakoon-Gunawardene 1991:40).
44. Arrack, legally distilled from coconut palm sap, cost Rs. 120/ (U.S.$2.50) per bottle; eight bottles would come to about Rs. 1000/ (U.S.$20).

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BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

New Worlds from Fragments: Film, Ethnography, and the Representation of Northwest Coast Cultures
Rosalind C. Morris
Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994. xi + 202 pp. $49.50 (cloth)

Reviewer: Michael M. Ames
Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia

This is an intelligent work of cultural criticism that deserves to be widely read. Morris locates her film analysis within the larger postmodernist frames that have become so familiar, but without becoming subservient to them.

Nine films (from some 200 available ones), including some of the classics, are selected for examination: *Bella Bella* (1975), *Blunden Harbour* (1951), *Box of Treasures* (1983), *In the Land of the War Canoes* (1914), *Potlatch . . . a strict law bids us dance* (1975), *Saving the Sagas* (1927), *The Silent Ones* (1961), *The Tsimshian Indians of the Skeena River* (1925-27) and *Totem* (1959). The discussion of each begins with a detailed synopsis to provide "a thickly described interpretation" (p. 46). The author then shows how a film's thematic content is derived from more general paradigmatic traditions and institutional interests found in anthropology, museums and, to a lesser degree, popular culture (including *Dances with Wolves* and *Incident at Oglala*). The major contrast described is between films produced before 1970 about Northwest Coast First Nations by non-Natives and those produced more recently under the sponsorship or direction of, or in collaboration with, First Nations communities. Curtis's *In the Land of the Head Hunters* and the CBC's *Totem* serve as examples of the former, while the U'Mista Cultural Centre's *Box of Treasures* is probably the best-known example of the latter.

Many of the tropes and rhetorical strategies of the earlier films are carried forward to the self-representational ones, but they are recontextualized: from a paradigm of salvage ethnography to counterhegemonic narratives of "resistance and cultural regeneration" (p. 137). Morris describes how this inversion in the more recent films of "epitomizing events" (p. 138) or tropes (such as the loss of land or banning of the potlatch) occurs within the earlier established non-Native film tradition. Inevitably, "resistance must always be carried out under or even behind, the banner of the reigning vision" (p. 135). She then proceeds, in each chapter, to effectively link these observations to broader theoretical issues, "to comprehend the ways in which film and other representational forms emerge out of concrete historical circumstances and then reenter history as constituent parts" (p. 176).

As stimulating as is Morris's examination of tropes, it is nevertheless inevitable that such a perspective will manufacture tropes of its own. The rhetorical strategies of films are related to others in written ethnographies, for example, but the film work of anthropologists is not related to *their* other works. Thus, she offers *Totem*—which describes the Royal British Columbia Museum and UBC Museum of Anthropology totem-pole expedition to Ninstints on the Queen Charlotte Islands—as an example of the salvage interests of anthropologists Wilson Duff, Michael Kew, Harry Hawthorn and Wayne Suttles. She excludes from her "gaze" the fact that this salvage operation was only a

minor part of their anthropological contributions, most of which were not concerned with salvage. Hawthorn, the founding director of the Museum of Anthropology, gave most of his attention to contemporary social and political issues, including promoting contemporary Northwest Coast craft production and directing (prior to the Ninstints trip) the pioneering socio-economic survey of contemporary BC Indians. Duff was the only member of that trip who was fully engaged in museum work, and even he was as much (if not more) concerned with renewal than salvage.

Morris correctly notes that the separation between anthropology and the museum at UBC "was never finally achieved," and that the Department of Anthropology and Sociology "derived much of its public credibility" from association with the museum (p. 88). Throughout the history of this relationship, however, only a small minority of department members were ever involved in museum work. For the first 20 years, from 1947, the Museum of Anthropology was almost entirely the responsibility of Audrey Hawthorn and her students. Even today there are only three cross-appointments. Finally, Douglas Cole is listed as Dennis Cole on p. 135 and in the index, and there is no "e" in Hawthorn. But these are all minor quibbles about what is otherwise a fine book.

The Caribbean Diaspora in Canada: Learning to Live with Racism
Frances Henry
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. xv + 297 pp. $60.00 (cloth), $22.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Stanley R. Barrett
University of Guelph

In this study, one of Canada's foremost experts on racism examines the everyday life of the approximately 300 000 people of Caribbean origin in southern Ontario. A general ethnographic picture is built up in chapters ranging from the family to employment, education, religion, leisure activities and relationships with the police and the legal system. Data were gathered through participant observation and unstructured interviews, the latter carried out by five Black assistants with roots in the Caribbean. Henry supervised the field work, trained the interviewers, selected the interview sample (134 individuals), analyzed the data and wrote the text. Among the book's strengths are pertinent background data on Caribbean history and culture, comparisons with racism in Britain and the United States and rich case material from the interviews, often presented verbatim.

The central conclusion of this study is that Black immigrants from the Caribbean (Indo-Caribbeans are not dealt with) have been excluded from full participation in Canadian life, owing to the racism that they have confronted and, also, to a lesser degree, to cultural practices brought from the Caribbean. Such racism is found in the educational system, with its Eurocentric curriculum and the familiar stereotype that Blacks excel in sports rather than scholarship. Henry indicates that people from the Caribbean have tended to concentrate in a few residential areas in Toronto, a product of both their own desires and racist obstacles. Contrary to popular opinion, their participation rate in the labour force is slightly higher than the Canadian average, although few have made it to the top of the class structure. Noteworthy is the number of

individuals who have established their own businesses, often in order to escape the widespread racism that exists on the factory floor.

Henry argues that, regardless of Blacks' social class, racism is part of their everyday lives in Toronto. The class factor leads us to one of the author's most important arguments: there is no single Caribbean community in Toronto. First, Caribbean Blacks come from various countries, and not always do they see eye to eye. Second, there are deep class divisions among people of Caribbean origin. Such divisions also existed in the Caribbean, but with a difference. As Henry states, "The main determinant of class in the Caribbean is skin colour and related racial features" (p. 268). Among Blacks in Canada, the criterion of skin colour has been replaced by education, income and occupation. In addition, the emphasis placed in the Caribbean on family reputation has diminished among immigrants.

Cultural practices imported from the Caribbean that supposedly hinder adjustment and acceptance are influenced by class position. Examples are common-law relationships, single motherhood (sometimes teenagers) and the absence of fathers from the family, all of which are more prevalent in the lower and working classes and which were generated long ago by the Caribbean's history of colonialism and racism. Henry reveals that 24.5 percent of Caribbean families in Canada are single-parent families, more than twice the overall Canadian rate. In contrast to the Caribbean, where the father is absent in Canada, women cannot call on the extended family for assistance. According to Henry, the phenomenon of the absent father generates a great deal more resentment among the children in Canada than it does in the Caribbean, and this may be one of the sources of marginalization and alienation among Black youth.

Henry's discussion of alienated youth is especially significant. On the positive side, there is the increased pride in being Black that accompanies the migration process. On the negative side, there is the reaction to racism among young Blacks. Unlike their parents, who were prepared to swallow insults and toil in menial jobs, youth are more inclined to drop out of school, take to the streets and hustle for a living. Henry bravely deals with the contentious topic of Black crime. She notes: "that there is a significant level of criminal activity in the Black community, especially among young Jamaicans, is indisputable" (p. 204). Most Blacks who commit crimes, she argues, belong to the underclass—poor people with little prospect of economic prosperity. In fact, criminal activity amounts to a coping mechanism for these individuals, who are caught in a vicious circle which starts with the racist environment. They hit the streets, commit crimes, become labelled as criminal types and commit yet more crimes. The media and the police generalize the illegal activities of the underclass to all Blacks, failing to appreciate Black class divisions.

Although this study is sound ethnography, it is not theoretically sophisticated. At the macro level, Henry opens with an overview of pluralism, a theoretical approach that is both dated and adds very little to the study. At the micro level, there are few insights, and often the reader is left wishing for more analysis. The author takes pains to define racism, but, surprisingly, in view of the emphasis placed on class, she makes no effort to define that concept or to discuss the complex and often contradictory theoretical approaches to stratification. There are also some problems with respect to style. This book reads a bit like a first draft. The prose is neither graceful nor elegant, and the amount of irksome repetition should have caught the copy editor's attention.

These criticisms aside, the book can be recommended to anyone who wants a deeper knowledge of Blacks in Canada, as well as a better understanding of race relations. As Henry indicates, the Caribbean-origin community is on the verge of institutional com-

pleteness, opting for a self-contained micro-society, not least of all because the prospects for assimilation are ruled out by racism.

Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America
Margaret Lock
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. xiiv + 439 pp. $38.00 (cloth)

Reviewer: Nanciellen Davis
Mount Saint Vincent University

This book will be essential reading for many audiences. Lock grapples with issues central to anthropology, including the relationship between biology and culture, and that between individual experience and cultural expectation. She does this through the study of a portion of the life cycle, the mid-life period of transition (*konenki*), as understood by Japanese women and health professionals. She compares her Japanese findings with those from surveys on menopause conducted with women in Massachusetts and Manitoba. The analysis is presented within a larger discussion of the ideological representation of women's bodies and lives.

The material collected in Japan, where Lock has conducted periodic research over 20 years, includes interviews with middle-aged women in more than 100 households. These narratives reveal much about women's experiences at mid-life. For example, the event of final menstruation is of relatively little significance to them. Social roles, such as rearing children and caring for elderly mothers- and fathers-in-law, are of more concern than the change in their reproductive status. Questionnaires completed by over 1000 Japanese women, and comparisons drawn from the Massachusetts and Manitoba studies, suggest that menopause is not experienced in the same way by women in Japan and North America. Discomforts that North American women associate with menopause (such as tiredness, hot flashes and night sweats) are less commonly reported by Japanese women, who are more apt to experience backaches and headaches during the mid-life transition period.

Culture contributes to the interpretations that Japanese women have of their mid-life experiences, including their understanding that menopause is only one aspect of *konenki*. However, Lock discounts culture as the sole factor responsible for disparities between the way Japanese women interpret and experience the mid-life transition and the way North American women do. She suggests that endocrine-system differences may contribute to the dissimilarity in symptoms reported by Japanese and North American women at mid-life.

Various chapters constitute self-contained essays on the following topics: the medicalization of the life cycle in Euro-American culture (chaps. 11 and 12); modernization and gendered activity (chap. 4); social change and the family (chaps. 5 and 6); or socialization and world view (chap. 8). For those scholars interested in the relationship between biology and culture, medical anthropology and gender and aging, the volume should be read in its entirety. Lock's prose is elegant, and her coverage of the literature extensive. The volume well demonstrates that the anthropological study of aging has much to contribute to anthropology as a whole.

Going by the Moon and the Stars: Stories of Two Russian Mennonite Women
Pamela E. Klassen
Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994. vii + 151 pp. $19.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Helene Demers
Malaspina University College

This innovative work attempts to apply the life histories of two Russian Mennonite women to the understanding of gender and religious identity. Klassen challenges the absence of women's stories from the collective Mennonite consciousness and illuminates the dynamic relationship between the courses of these women's lives and the patriarchal culture and religious structures within which they evolved. Like many personal histories, Katja's and Agatha's not only reveal dominant ideologies but also record a rebellion against them.

The introduction provides a brief history of Russian Mennonites and an explanation of the study's research methodology. Chapter 1, which I find particularly compelling, presents edited narratives of Agatha's and Katja's lives. The subsequent three chapters elaborate on what Klassen considers the most significant aspects of their life stories: marriage and motherhood, war and Mennonite identity. The final chapter covers theoretical and methodological reflections.

The author draws her methodology from feminist ethnography, its theory and practice, as well as its attempts to reduce the power imbalances in the ethnographic process. The line between research and exploitation is perhaps nowhere as finely drawn as in the intensely personal process of writing and interpreting life histories. Two important tenets of feminist scholarship are that: (1) women should be presented as speakers in their own right, as the authorities of their own experience, and (2) description should be accompanied by analysis or explanation, in order to lay the basis for social change. Klassen succeeds only partially in resolving the contradictions present in feminist ethnography. Her editing of the recorded material and the dispersal of re-interpretation, explanation and analysis throughout most of the book at times obscures the voices of Katja and Agatha. This approach contradicts the feminist goal of validating women as speakers in their own right and as authorities of their own experience. The relationship between the recorder and narrator is critical to the telling of the story and, ultimately, to the understanding of the final result, but it is possible to accompany a life history with analysis or explanation without intruding on the account itself. An excellent example is Sarah Preston's *Let the Past Go: A Life History of Alice Jacobs* (Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 104, 1986), which represents a non-hierarchical approach by presenting recorded sessions intact, without absenting the author, and offering a separate academic analysis following each chapter. These strategies allow a true reflection of the emphasis and interests of the narrator, and they are useful for transmitting information at many levels. When presented in this way, life-history narratives are understandable and meaningful to both the academic and the non-academic world.

In working with Katja and Agatha simultaneously, Klassen makes an interesting and effective methodological choice. Comparative analysis can generate more questions and directions for interpretation than a single life history. The differences between the individual women's lives, particularly in their experience of World War II, is central to Klassen's interpretation of the religious identity of Russian Mennonite women in

Canada. *Going by the Moon and the Stars* is of great value to the study of Mennonite women, history and religion. It joins a growing body of works that attempt to disassemble patriarchal history and epistemology.

Eagle Down Is Our Law: Witsuwit'en Law, Feasts, and Land Claims
Antonia Mills
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994. xx + 208 pp. $49.95 (cloth), $24.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Leland Donald
University of Victoria

The Gitksan-Witsuwit'en land claims case (*Delgamuukw v. the Queen*) has become somewhat notorious among Canadian anthropologists both for the judgment rendered against the land claim and for Chief Justice Allan McEachern's negative assessment of the reports and testimony that several anthropologists provided as expert witnesses for the Native peoples. The core of this book is the report which one of these anthropologists, Antonia Mills, presented to the court in an attempt to explain the Witsuwit'en perspective on many issues that the Witsuwit'en themselves see as important to understanding their way of life and their land claims. Most of the remainder of the book consists of Mills's discussion of the background and context of her report.

This publication will allow anthropologists and others to decide for themselves about the report and Chief Justice McEachern's comments on it. The book should be read alongside McEachern's "Reasons for Judgment," and the various commentaries about this case that continue to come out (the most useful of which remains the special issue of *BC Studies* 95 [1992]).

In a scholarly context, valuable information is presented about the contemporary Witsuwit'en (an important "Carrier" group), especially on feasting, social groups and names (titles). The book is, however, neither orthodox nor "postmodern" ethnography. The author makes it clear that she is presenting a view that Witsuwit'en themselves wish presented. Her claim is validated by the fact that one of the Witsuwit'en chiefs contributed a preface to the book and that the book is copyrighted by the Gitksan-Witsuwit'en Tribal Government. The book is not, however, an "insider's" account of Witsuwit'en society and culture. It was written by an "outsider," and Mills makes no claims to speak from "inside," using aspects of traditional anthropological scholarly apparatus and ideas, while striving to communicate a Witsuwit'en perspective. Even so, this is not an anthropologist's "translation" of another culture; nor is it a standard scholarly monograph. Its role as a court document precludes this. But a comparison with the anthropological "evidence" given in many U.S. land-claims cases (see the many examples published by Garland in their American Indian Ethnohistory series) reveals great differences in approach, perspective and topics covered when the indigenous point of view controls the agenda.

This Witsuwit'en-controlled document challenges both the Euro-Canadian legal and political system, as well as anthropological approaches to ethnography. At least in the opening round, the legal system rejected the challenge. Anthropologists will, I hope, be more receptive. But many will see this new ethnographic form as a complement to, rather than a replacement of, other more traditional ethnographic forms.

One reservation that should be noted is that it is *a* Witsuwit'en view that is presented, not *the* or *several* Witsuwit'en views. Mills does acknowledge the existence of differences of opinion and disagreements among the Witsuwit'en, but the general image presented is of a degree of Witsuwit'en consensus that may well strike those familiar with North American aboriginal communities as highly idealized.

Taking Control: Power and Contradiction in First Nations Adult Education
Celia Haig-Brown
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995. xiv + 288 pp. $45.95 (cloth), $24.95 (paper)

Reviewer: A.D. Fisher
University of Alberta

Taking Control is a narrative-like account of what some participants had to say about the Native Education Centre (NEC) in Vancouver. The author focusses her attention on the political concept of "Indian control of Indian education," and on power and contradiction in relation to the people she interviewed at the NEC. The author says that, "this study is a critical ethnography. It is an investigation of the ways that people associated with a particular First Nations adult educational institution talk and act on their understandings of First Nations control" (p. 16).

The book's nine chapters are divided into three parts. There are five chapters in the first part, which is theoretical and methodological. There are three chapters in the second, the narrative part. The last part comprises one chapter.

Haig-Brown represents the views of her interviewees well. Indeed, the second part of the book is primarily composed of their words, and the research document was returned to them for review. However, these words seem disconnected from the theoretical perspective adopted in this, her dissertation, research. This is probably because Foucault's "power" did not fit easily into the discussions with the NEC staff and students about Indian control.

In the concluding chapter there is another unfortunate disconnection. Here Haig-Brown says, "it was I, the non-Native researcher, who found contradiction to be integral to the study" (p. 231). A primary contradiction was the struggle between the necessity of building and using an awareness of Native perspective (or being Native), on the one hand, and, on the other, the necessity of achieving the training and employment goals of the program and its funding agencies.

At several points, she mentions Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's work regarding contradiction, but nowhere in this work does the idea attain the central position it holds in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). Freire's book is about the post-literacy stage of adult education and the generative themes in it. Early in its investigation, dialogue uncovers "the nuclei of the principle and secondary contradictions" (p. 104) around which one could organize an educational-action program. Freire says that a program based on these observed contradictions would be more likely to succeed than one based on "decisions from the top" (p. 105).

Here is where we find the disconnection between Haig-Brown's theory about power and the narrative about Indian control. The book is a report on Ph.D. research—where theory almost inevitably comes from the top—rather than a report on applied research

or educational action in a Freirean sense. This is also the crunch of the contradiction. Haig-Brown can take the concept no further than to say that it is useful to academics trying to understand Indian control of Indian education, while for Native Peoples trying to wrest control of their education from the dominant society, contradiction is a "name" for the tensions and discomfort they experience in the process. Neither her supervisory committee at the university nor the NEC Administrator could give her permission or encourage her to dialogue with her interviewees about contradictions, "limit-situations" and themes. As an ethnographer (and an outsider), Haig-Brown is surrounded by the climate of contradiction, but cannot undertake "the action and reflection of men [*sic*] upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire 1970:66). Praxis is denied the NEC, too, by its program attachment to institutionalized provincial and federal Indian education and development programs. (The Navaho Rough Rock Demonstration School experienced program problems in many ways similar to the NEC's.)

Begun in 1968, in one room and with 12 students, the NEC now has 361 students, 50 staff members and its own building. Its student-completion rate is astonishingly high. Though this success was inspired and directed by a leader who was himself inspired by *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freirean liberation was neither sought nor achieved. It is ironic (a contradiction) that, despite this dramatic success, the NEC is denied both praxis and liberation.

This same irony is found in the NEC's two most important and successful programs: the Native Adult Basic Education Program and the Native Family Violence and Community Service Program. The former strives to get its participants to reach grade 12 equivalency, while fostering First Nations identity and respect. The latter teaches about cultural oppression and self-hatred as elements in community and family violence. Yet the NEC teachers are not able to develop the contradictions, limit-situations and themes expressed in fostering identity and respect in the face of self-hatred and oppression. The problem-posing investigation proposed by Freire (ibid.:101), based on the "men"/world relationship, is not what is being practised. Indeed, the only transformation of a contradiction that Haig-Brown mentions is not an academic one, but is rather the personal recognition of a contradiction by a First Nations instructor.

Taking Control is not so much about the issue of Indians taking control of their education as it is about the role that that idea has played in the achievement of the NEC's success. Individual successes by staff and students are constrained and entangled by bureaucratic funding contradictions. These limit-situations cannot be confronted in a Freirean way, because to do so would be to risk the individual successes. As Freire suggested, the theme of our epoch is domination, and, within this thematic universe, the successes of NEC and the critical ethnography can be applauded, especially considering the climate of contradiction in which we all work.

Paradise: Class, Commuters and Ethnicity in Rural Ontario
Stanley R. Barrett
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. xiv + 315 pp. $50.00 (cloth), $18.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Max J. Hedley
University of Windsor

Paradise is a pseudonym for a small town in southern Ontario that is the focus of this "diachronic community study." Located within commuting distance of Toronto, its population consists of natives (long-term residents), newcomers ("white ethnics" who arrived after 1960) and minorities (primarily Asian and African Canadians). The study is somewhat unusual in that Barrett is an insider returning to the community of his youth. However, with six years of research, approximately 400 interviews, participant observation and the use of documentary sources, it is apparent that we are dealing with a painstaking researcher who shows no signs of submitting to the nostalgic imagery of a putative past.

Paradise is a community in only an "administrative and geographical sense" (p. 23), since competition, conflict and clear social divisions (of class, ethnicity and gender) are more characteristic of it than are common values or a common sense of belonging. The study compares the Paradise of the 1950s, an era in which élite families exerted considerable local control, with the restructured community of the 1980s, which is characterized by extensive external bureaucratic regulation of local affairs and the transfer of political power from the old élite to the middle classes. The periods are thematically linked through a focus on stratification, migration and race and ethnic relations, which "identify a tightly integrated system of social change in Ontario" (p. 31). Class and ethnic stratification provide the underlying framework of the book. However, while he recognizes class as the "bedrock of social stratification" (p. 28), a broader, comprehensive understanding of social stratification is central to the organization of the study.

A social stratum is seen as an "unorganized category of people in a hierarchy with similar characteristics, life chances, and social goods" (p. 30). Defined this way, Barrett develops a model of stratification that takes into account the way residents of Paradise rank themselves. The model consists of upper, lower-upper, middle, lower-middle and lower classes, though other strata—such as an aspiring middle class yet to reconcile itself with its lower-middle-class material status—are occasionally introduced.

Barrett aims to "understand" Paradise by revealing the way residents "perceive their community and govern their behaviour" (p. 29). The model is used to organize the presentation of people's understandings by situating them within the stratification system. Consequently, Barrett is not tempted to represent local perceptions as a logically organized system of belief. Instead, he draws out the complex, and often contradictory, nature of people's understandings through individual case studies or more abbreviated extracts from their comments. Thus, we hear the voices of the other, as the author reveals their "dreams and anxieties in their own words" (p. 31). These voices are unavoidably muted, for they also serve to carry the narrative structure determined by the author. However, Barrett is well aware of issues of voice and authorship.

Barrett's examples reveal the reality of status in a small community. In the 1950s, Paradise could be "characterized as an elaborate code of reputation" (p. 77) in which

all knew their place. There is almost a sense of relief in the voices of those from the lower class who left the community and found that their "reputations," unlike those of residents who remained, did not follow them to their new homes. There is certainly distaste, even hatred, of the class system among both those who stayed and those who left. Of two sisters who expressed "rock hard hatred towards the community," the one who did not migrate "can be seen today walking along a street with her head down, too intimidated to look at people, her behaviour and attitudes" reflecting an era in which "poor people were expected to know their place" (p. 73).

The themes of migration and of race and ethnic relations are covered in the same manner. People are located in terms of their place in the system of stratification, and their perceptions are presented through case studies and selected comments. We learn that racist ideas are pervasive, though for the lower classes these are expressed in economic terms, while members of the upper stratum are more likely to employ the fictional categories of scientific racism. While the racism here is "shallow," as opposed to being "the deep racism of urban centres" (p. 270), we are left in no doubt that it intrudes, at times decisively, on the lives of some. For instance, the businesses of ethnic minorities did not always flourish in the way they might have done.

In many studies of locality, broader structural issues are briefly acknowledged, at best, or simply ignored. Barrett falls into the former category. He recognizes the "unseen hands of the political economy" (p. 129) and the intrusion of bureaucratic regulation on local affairs, though these themes are not developed. Yet, this issue of perspective cannot fairly be used to gauge Barrett's work. The author sets out to examine stratification, race and ethnic relations and migration in terms of people's perceptions, and he accomplishes this in an insightful manner. At times, Barrett is tempted to include too much. There is, for example, brief mention of incest, crime and religion, which do not always further the central narrative. Yet even here there are compensations, for Barrett's skills as a researcher ensures that the details he provides are never without interest. Rich in detail, the book offers a rare and valuable account of the extensive changes occurring in a "rural" community where class and ethnic relations are "in line with those in the city" (p. 31). Moreover, despite the particularistic focus, the changes described appear relevant to the experience of "nearby towns" and fringe communities generally.

American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly
Frances Paul Prucha
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. xvi + 562. N.p. (cloth)

Reviewer: James Youngblood Henderson
Native Law Centre of Canada, University of Saskatchewan

This intriguing book about treaties is both comprehensive and disappointing. It is a comprehensive chronology of treaties from a colonizer's historical policy perspective. It is apologetic for the United States' implementation of treaty promises. But it is incomprehensible from a rule-of-law perspective.

The distance between rule-of-law and historical construction of treaties is clear in this book. The rule-of-law asserts that any ambiguities in treaties are to be interpreted as the Indians would have understood them, but this esteemed historian is content with

exploring the other side of the treaties, the so-called, national "white perspective" (pp. xiii-xvi). This is most disappointing, since the colonizer's perspective is well known and has been rejected in the 20th century by the federal courts. These duelling constructions are evident throughout the book, resulting in an unbalanced assessment.

Another conceptual bias arises from what the author calls the "white perspective." That is, the book is based on the assumption that treaties with indigenous people are politically anomalous. This is the American colonizer perspective, and it is propaganda. The fact is that, around the world, treaties with indigenous polities are the norm, not the anomaly. The concept of political anomaly is the apologetic context allowing latter-day colonizers to ignore indigenous self-determination for self-interest. This one-sided colonial perspective predominates in various analyses, making the value of the volume questionable.

For example, Prucha builds his book around Chief Justice John Marshall's suggestion, in the Cherokee Nation case (1831), that "[t]he condition of the Indians in relation to the United States is perhaps unlike that of any other two people in existence" (p. 550). But the author ignores Marshall's argument, in Worcester 1832, that the Indian treaty, "in its language, and in its provisions, is formed, as near as may be, on the model of treaties between the crowned heads of Europe" (p. 550). If the latter understanding was taken as fundamental, the thesis of the book and its explanation of legal oppression would collapse.

It was also disappointing to see the author begin his analysis with the Delawares, in 1778, overlooking the Mikmaq-Maliseet treaty with the United States, in Watertown 1776. This is a small point, but a significant one, in the context of the neglect of the northeastern states that has recently been corrected by Congress.

In a history of American Indian Treaties in the post-colonial era, scholars expect fair evaluations. Any author must challenge assumptions rooted in colonialism, many of which remain today. Historians should strive to keep from affirming or imposing new forms of colonialism. They should refuse either to indulge in colonial nostalgia or to justify colonialist policy and practice. This book missed a tremendous opportunity to balance colonialist with aboriginal history.

Ethnicity and Aboriginality: Case Studies in Ethnonationalism
Michael Levin, ed.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. xiii + 179 pp. $50.00 (cloth), $19.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Deirdre Meintel
Université de Montréal

This collection is based on a conference, held in late 1990, that took as its point of departure the propositions about ethnicity and nationalism made in a 1973 article by Walker Conner. The articles focus on groups having some claim to aboriginal status, by virtue of a historical tie to a given territory and, in most cases, a cultural distinctiveness from surrounding groups. A wide range of cases are presented from Canada, Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria and Australia.

One interesting issue that emerges from several articles is the international dimension of ethnonationalism in the present day. Audiences and reference groups beyond

the border of the nation-state are likely to affect how identity and nationalist claims are played out, as Tanner notes in his article on the Inuit of Labrador. This theme is central to Nagata's article on Malays, whose aboriginal status (so unlike that of other groups described in the book) is privileged in the national context but irrelevant to their identification with Muslims from the central Islamic states of the Middle East.

This collection also shows that the process of naturalizing language and culture, in order to assert "self-evident" claims to ethnic jurisdiction (to paraphrase Levin, p. 164), is fraught with political risks and contradictions, whether these claims be based on historical priority or on sheer numbers. For example, an ethnonationalist claim based on historical depth may be challenged by another group with still older roots. As Nagata shows, some Chinese and Indian families have been present on the Malay peninsula longer than some who claim Malay identity. One is reminded of Native Peoples' responses to certain historical justifications for sovereignty invoked by Quebec nationalists. Moreover, as Nagata notes, privileging one group on the basis of aboriginal status means discriminating against immigrants, not always a feasible or acceptable alternative.

Furthermore, as Levin points out in his study of the Bette (Nigeria), ethnonationalism in one group can intensify the group identities of others in the same nation or region. This was the case for the Bette, a small group in relation to their Igbo neighbours, whose efforts to secede led to the short-lived state of Biafra. Except for brief episodes, though, the Bette have generally rejected nationalism, perhaps because of their small numbers, choosing instead to defend their interests through alliances with other Nigerian groups outside their region.

In the book's conclusion, Levin notes that secession is only rarely the solution adopted by groups seeking cultural autonomy. In fact, there is a range of possible modalities for satisfying ethnonationalist aspirations short of outright ethnic separateness. However, negotiating the issues involved may well require overcoming historical biases built into existing legislation and policy, as Asch and Macklem show in their analyses of Canada's relation with its Native Peoples. Tanner's chapter on the Inuit of Labrador shows, furthermore, that not all groups with a claim to aboriginal status accept the legitimacy of the modern state.

Probably the collection's greatest strength is the indisputable competence of the authors regarding the societies and groups they treat. The empirical basis of the papers is generally thorough and convincing. However, I would like to have seen more comparative discussion, with contributors relating their cases to others—whether in the present collection or not—such as Maoris and Tibetans, as well as to theoretical works on nationalism (e.g., those of Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner). Of course, Michael Levin's readable concluding chapter sheds light on some of the comparative issues implicit in the highly diverse analyses and case materials presented by the other contributors, and it leaves the reader with much to reflect upon. Lastly, an index and more detailed information on the contributors, whose university affiliations are listed at the end of the book, would have been helpful.

Though the interest-value of some of the articles will be largely restricted to those who focus specifically on the political and cultural claims of indigenous peoples, several (those by Nagata and Tanner, in particular) are presented in such a way as to be interesting to a wider audience. Beyond its contribution to scholars concerned with the political organization of ethnic diversity, the high quality of the collection as a whole should be emphasized.

Bitter Feast: Amerindians and Europeans in Northeastern North America, 1600-64 (originally **Le Pays Renversé**, 1985)
Denys Delâge
Translated by Jane Brierley
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993. xi + 399 pp. $60.00 (cloth), $29.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Virginia P. Miller
Dalhousie University

Delâge set a formidable task for himself in *Bitter Feast*: a consideration of northeastern North American economic history in colonial times, from the perspectives of both European colonizers and Natives. He accomplishes this task with an economic perspective focussing on the fur trade, first examining the internal domestic situations of the three major European powers at the beginning of the 17th century: the emerging English capitalists, whose domestic economy pitted cottage industries against large landowners; the tolerant and successful Dutch capitalists, with a thriving peasant class at home; and the French feudal society, with its poor and suffering peasant class.

Drawing heavily on accounts from the *Jesuit Relations*, Delâge then provides similarly thorough descriptions of Iroquois and Huron groups, emphasizing their pre-contact economic practices. He then describes the developing fur trade, which was initially based on Native exchange practices, but which quickly changed as the trade was subsumed by the world economy. The eagerness of both Huron and Iroquois for the goods that the fur trade offered brought about a rapid depletion of beaver pelts in their territories by 1640, causing the Huron to carry out more intensive trade with inland tribes for pelts to offer the French, while the Iroquois intensified raiding to obtain pelts for the Dutch.

From Delâge's account, we see that the Jesuit strategy for conversion not only introduced the fur trade to new groups, but Jesuit contact also resulted in the introduction of epidemics of European diseases and large-scale culture change and destruction. The Huron who survived this onslaught lived in a culture that was divided between Catholic converts, who lived according to European standards, and traditionalists, who refused Catholicism.

Delâge also describes European rivalry in the New World. After 1620, England encouraged its peasants to emigrate to the mid-Atlantic and New England regions, where these energetic settlers thrived. The Dutch monopoly trade company, however, discouraged settlers; wars at home depleted the Dutch economy, and Holland faltered in the New World. Thus, England assumed control of the Atlantic economy after the 1660s. France, with its feudal society at home, and church and monarchy directing its New World operations, maintained a marginal position.

Delâge follows this with a description of how the European powers transplanted European-type society to the New World, while denying the Natives access to the benefits of this society. In the jockeying for power, England triumphed and moved to a dominant position in the world economy, while the New World Natives witnessed the depletion of their natural resources and disintegration of their societies.

This summary may make *Bitter Feast* sound somewhat pedestrian, but that is definitely not the case. It is engrossing, enlightening and even lively reading, with its interdisciplinary approach that combines anthropological and historical data that are

interpreted from an economic perspective. Through this perspective, the reader gains a new appreciation of both European history and Native North American history of the first two-thirds of the 17th century. We learn of European economies and their interactions with one another, as well as with North American Natives, as Delâge stresses the constant unequal nature of the European-Native exchange.

Delâge is able to accomplish all this because of the fresh approach and interpretations he offers, based on both new and previously studied material (e.g., his assessment of the effects of the fur trade on Native cultures and the resulting culture change, or his interpretation of the Dutch/Iroquois trade relationship, which parallels that of the French and Huron). His use of extensive quotations from primary sources adds a contemporary and human dimension to the study.

The writing style is clear, with minimal awkwardness in the translation. Occasional summaries of material in the book are helpful to the reader. The index is well organized and presented. For all the above reasons, it is easy to see why the book was a prize winner when it first appeared in 1985. It will be a long time before a more comprehensive and readable work on the fur trade appears.

Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture
Karla Poewe, ed.
Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994. xiv + 300 pp. $34.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Joan B. Townsend
University of Manitoba

Focussing on charismatics, this excellent interdisciplinary collection addresses both Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity as global movements, and deals with the history, spread and characteristics of both. Several underlying themes run through the book: (1) Charismatic Christianity is global. Not merely a Western export, it has evolved in a number of places and is "experiential, idealistic, biblical, and oppositional" (p. xii); (2) The concept of metonym facilitates analysis. Poewe defines metonym as "seeing a simple happening as an aspect of a whole that caused it, even when the whole itself is but tacitly known" (p. 235); (3) Charismatics and Pentecostals emphasize the experience of Gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g., healing, speaking in tongues), thus validating the belief that God is present; and (4) The relation of Pentecostals to Charismatics is worthy of examination.

Poewe's "Introduction" is particularly useful, enabling the reader to see immediately the overall organization and interrelations of the individual studies included in the compilation. She not only provides a synopsis of the papers, but places them in the broader context of the book, and critiques various points raised by their authors. She also provides a history of the threads of the Charismatic movement in North America and elsewhere, noting that the Charismatic movement is not "new" (as of the 1960s), but rather has roots in established traditions. In the "Methods and Models" section, André Droogers addresses problems related to the degree to which researchers and their subjects regard religious experiences as normal, and he presents a model for studying religious phenomena without merely explaining them away. Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, studying South African Charismatic churches, critique methods of studying Charismatics that often result in biased results. Anthropological methods of

participant-observation of interactional networks, combined with life histories of practitioners, they argue, will provide a better understanding of the movement than survey-type questionnaires. Parallel inventions and diffusion, they note, should also be considered when studying Charismatic origins.

In section 2, "Regional Overviews and Variations," David Martin carries on a theme, found throughout the book, that religion has been mistakenly taken to be of little significance. In his descriptive analysis of the development of Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity in Latin America since the 1950s, he stresses its significance as a gauge for "disintegration and a form of popular reorientation" which carries potentially major implications for society, culture, economy and politics (p. 74). Mark Mullins continues the global and syncretic focus by examining two aspects of Korean Pentecostalism: (1) the synthesis of Korean shamanism and folk religion with Pentecostalism, and (2) the missionization to Japan by Korean Pentecostals.

Russell Spittler clarifies similarities and differences between Pentecostals, Charismatics and Fundamentalists. Unlike Fundamentalists, Pentecostals and Charismatics stress that gifts of the spirit are valid today. Charismatics remain in mainstream religions; Pentecostals are separate. Fundamentalists and Pentecostals interpret the Bible literally, but Fundamentalists try to correct theological deviations, while Pentecostals focus on the experiential.

In section 3, "Cases Turning Orality into Literary Narrative," Charles Nienkirchen distinguishes ahistorical, exclusivist Pentecostals—who want to restore the supernatural powers of the apostles and use a dispensational pre-millennarian approach—from Charismatics. The latter take a historical approach, seeing an unbroken lineage with the first-century apostles. As Poewe points out, Nancy Schwartz, Stanley Johannesen and W.J. Hollenweger discuss whether or not researchers can understand the importance of the Holy Spirit if they are not involved. Schwartz studied Legio Maria, an Independent Catholic church in Kenya. Here, people are attempting to transform an oral into a written culture, referencing the authority of the Holy Spirit and the continuation of the apostolic line. Johannesen, an ex-Pentecostal, sees modern Pentecostalism as sterile and institutionalized, in contrast to its dynamic charismatic beginnings. He studied third- and fourth-generation white North American Pentecostals in terms of how his current perception of reality differs from what Pentecostals perceive through their metonymic references. Hollenweger examines the chasm between Pentecostal elites and the poor. He observes that it is the oral quality of Third-World Pentecostalism that contributes to its phenomenal growth, which overcomes barriers of race, society and language.

In section 4, "Charismatic Christian Thought," Gerard Roelofs' study of Flemish Catholic Charismatics illustrates how experience is translated into religious narrative. He argues that metonymic thought creates literal thinking, intolerance and fundamentalism, but may lead to discoveries, while metaphorical interpretations can become routine and sterile. Finally, Poewe observes that Charismatic Christianity has been almost ignored by anthropologists. She looks at Christians who are scientists to see how they deal with illusion versus reality, and, in so doing, she provides insights for anthropologists and others who are researching the movement.

This highly recommended book is useful to an audience with interests broader than just Charismatic Christianity. It is heavily footnoted, so that the non-specialist can quickly gain a grasp of the significant definitions, terminology, perspectives and issues.

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