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Women Tea Pluckers, Torrington Tea Estate, Sri Lanka. Photo by Amali Philips, December 1999.

Femmes effectuant la cueillete du thé. Plantation de thé de Torrington, Sri Lanka. Photo par Amali Philips, décembre 1999.

Turning Inside Out? Globalization, Neo-liberalism and Welfare States

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Abstract: Apocalyptic accounts of globalization bringing about the end of the welfare state (and the nation state) have been countered by political-institutionalist views of adaptation. Such views treat globalization as an external force, or pressure, rather than a set of processes that are also internalized within nations. I argue that a more differentiated view of globalization can reveal how it has unsettled welfare state/nation-state formations. In the process, taken-for-granted meanings and boundaries of nation-state-welfare have been destabilized. I conclude by suggesting that these processes have made citizenship a distinctive focus of political tensions and conflicts.

Keywords: citizenship; globalization; nation, neo-liberalism; state; welfare

Résumé : Des descriptions apocalyptiques de la globalisation provoquant la fin de l'État-Providence (et de l'État-Nation) ont été compensées par des visions institutionnelles d'adaptation. De telles vues considèrent la globalisation comme force externe, ou une pression, plutôt que comme un ensemble de processus qui se passent aussi à l'intérieur des nations. Je soutiens qu'une vision plus différenciée de la globalisation peut indiquer comment elle a affecté les formations de l'État-Providence ou de l'État-Nation. Dans ce processus, des significations prises pour acquises et des frontières de l'État-Nation-Providence ont été déstabilisées. Je conclus en émettant l'hypothèse que ces processus ont fait de la citoyenneté un foyer particulier de tensions et de conflits politiques.

Mots-clés : citoyenneté, mondialisation, nation, néolibéralisme, état, bien-être

This article emerges from an inter-disciplinary encounter, exploring what happens when anthropological approaches are brought to bear on questions that are conventionally understood as belong to other disciplines—in this case, politics, sociology and social policy. It examines ways of thinking about the relationship between globalization and welfare states and exploits anthropological analyses to reframe these issues. This encounter is, of course, partial and selective. These particular forms of disciplinary border crossing are enabled by a particular orientation—a shared concern with culture. This article borrows from anthropology to enable the "cultural turn" in social policy (Clarke, 2002). I have two ambitions for this article. One is that it moves on the debate about welfare states in my "home" discipline of social policy. The second is that it intersects productively with work in anthropology on welfare states, welfare reform and citizenship (e.g., Goode and Maskovsky, 2001; Gupta, 2001; Kingfisher, 2002; Ong, 1999). Both ambitions reflect a continuing belief in the value of border-crossing as a practice that enables and sustains "rethinking" as a core element of doing academic work.[1]

Globalization has emerged as one of the core concepts of contemporary social analysis (see the overview in Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999, for example). It has proved to be both influential and elusive. It has been brought to bear in the rethinking of central issues (see, for example, Appadurai, 2001; Sassen, 2001). At the same time, it has been challenged and critiqued as inaccurate and misleading (e.g, Hirst and Thompson, 1999). Here I explore its significance for thinking about the transformations of welfare states. In the process, I will argue against reductionist and economistic conceptions of globalization propounded by both enthusiasts and critics. This "apocalyptic" view of globalization as the force of global capital/markets sweeping all before them as they remake the world in their image is flawed in a number of ways (empirically, analytically

and politically). However, I will suggest that globalization remains significant as a site for thinking about the multiple destabilizations and dislocations that assail the welfare state/nation-state complex (Clarke, 2004). This will mean arguing for a more differentiated, uneven view of globalization as unlocking old, and taken for granted, formations of state, economy and society and creating possibilities, and pressures, for new alignments. As Yeates argues, globalization is a difficult issue for the study of social policy:

> Its integration into the field of social policy poses questions about many of the assumptions, concepts and theories that have been integral to social policy analysis. Social policy as a field of academic study is ill-suited to thinking beyond the nation state as its theories and concepts were developed in a national context. (2001: 19)

Nevertheless, globalization has been identified as a central force in the remaking of welfare states. Globalization has been seen as marking: the dominance of economics over politics; the power of global capital over nation-states; the installation of markets as dominant institution of co-ordination; and, finally, the "end" or dissolution of nation-states and welfare states (these issues are discussed more extensively in Clarke, 2001a, 2004; and Yeates, 2001). Here I examine the relationship between globalization and welfare states around three focal points:

• the argument between political-economy and political-institutionalist conceptions of globalization and welfare states (and its limitations);
• the relationship between globalization and neo-liberalism as a global strategy (but one which is enacted differentially);
• globalization as a process that takes place inside as well outside nation-states/welfare states.

I suggest that a more differentiated and uneven view of globalization is necessary for understanding what has been happening to welfare states (and nation states). I try to show how such a view of globalization illuminates the central and contested status of citizenship in the contemporary realignments of nations, states and welfare.

Globalization and the End of the Welfare State

Globalization's relationship to welfare states has been conventionally conceived as an external force or pressure that acts to dissolve or undermine the welfare state and the nation state. The "strong" (Yeates, 2001) or "apocalyptic" (Clarke, 2001b) view of globalization identifies the power of unleashed free markets (or global capital) to transform the world economically, politically and culturally. The rise of the global economy, in these accounts, dissolves barriers, blockages and borders that might stand in the way of the free movement of capital. Aided and abetted—or even driven—by information technology innovations, capital becomes "hypermobile," shedding its local or national moorings. All societies become subject to the same pressures. They encounter the same economic pressures (to open their economies; become "attractive" to investment; create flexible workers). They experience the same political pressures (to create low tax regimes; reduce "unproductive" public spending; deregulate capital and labour markets; support capital formation and accumulation). And they are subjected to the same cultural pressures (towards a global/American culture of consumption). As Yeates summarizes it:

> Overall, this account of the relationship between globalization and social policy stresses downward pressures on welfare states and the "prising open" of social pacts underpinning them. The influence of "strong" globalization theory's precepts and predictions is clearly evident in the way that the content of social policy is presented as being determined by "external"—mainly economic—constraints, largely beyond the control of governments; that national political, cultural and social differences will simply be "flattened" and social standards will plummet by the sheer "weight" and "force" of global economic forces. (2001: 26)

Globalization has been predominantly conceived of as an economic process or, perhaps more accurately, a process whose primary driving forces are economic ones. With the dissolution of the communist bloc, the world is increasingly envisaged as a single integrated market, in which deregulation works in the service of "free trade." Such processes have called into question the role of nation-states, national governments and their public spending programs (including social welfare) in a number of ways. First, there has been for some time a clear "business agenda" (Moody, 1987), in which corporate capital has articulated its demand for "business friendly environments" (places with low tax, low regulation, and low cost, low risk, labour). Such demands have been enforced by "capital flight": the reality or threat of relocating investment, industrial and commercial processes elsewhere. Second, such concerns have been installed as "global economic wisdom" in a variety of supra-national

organizations and agencies (such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organization, see Deacon, 1997). Their policies have tended to reinforce a vision of minimalist or "laissez-faire" government, centred on reducing levels of taxation and public spending. Fourthly, the process of "economizing" political, social and cultural realms reworks discussions of the relations between "culture" and "economy" (e.g. Ray and Sayer, 1999; du Gay and Pryke, 2001). Finally, there have been strong national and transnational political forces articulating and enforcing this vision of a global world of free trade. Neo-liberal political ideology has been unevenly influential but its effects have been particularly strong in Anglophone states (the U.K., U.S. and New Zealand, for example).[2]

This changing political economy has implications for the way welfare states are viewed. The most apocalyptically pessimistic view is that the new global economy has sounded the death knell for the developed (or "European") welfare state. Policies of economic and social management are not sustainable by national governments in the face of deregulated capitalism. Ulrich Beck, for example, has argued that

> The premises of the welfare state and pension system, of income support, local government and infrastructural policies, the power of organized labour, industry-wide collective bargaining, state expenditure, the fiscal system and "fair" taxation—all this melts under the withering sun of globalization....(Beck, 2000: 1)

There are reasons for treating such accounts of the end of the welfare state with some caution. One concerns the comparative evidence for welfare state decline or retrenchment (e.g. Kuhnle, 2000; Sykes, Palier and Prior, 2001; Taylor-Gooby, 2001). A number of studies have highlighted continuing divergences in national welfare states, despite evidence that international pressures on national governments are increasing. Kersbergen argues that:

> Empirical evidence and historical research necessarily lags behind sweeping theories. But whenever empirical evidence is presented, there seems to be little confirmation of radical changes induced by the dramatic crises that the theories so forcefully prophesied. No doubt, the empirical studies record extensively the immense pressures on, as well as the massive challenges to, the welfare state. Moreover, they provide evidence for incremental adjustment in the major social programmes, decreasing growth of social expenditures retrenchment....Welfare state research in the 1990s further documented empirically that wel-

fare states have been remarkably resistant to change notwithstanding the mounting challenges they face. Not surprisingly, a major explanatory problem for these dominant welfare state theories was the persistence rather than the crisis or "breakdown" of the major institutions of the welfare state. Both macro- and meso-institutional theories started to identify the crucial institutional mechanisms (e.g., path dependency and lock-in) that explain welfare state persistence. (2000: 20)

This more sceptical view of globalization's effects has become firmly established in comparative and international studies in social policy (see, inter alia, Alcock and Craig, 2001; Esping-Anderson, 1996; Gough, 2000; Sykes, Palier and Prior, 2001). Esping-Anderson and his colleagues conclude that "global economic competition does narrow policy choice" but that "standard accounts are exaggerated and risk being misleading. In part, the diversity of welfare states speaks against too much generalization" (1996: 2). This, then, points to a second approach to globalization and social welfare: one that stresses political-institutional differentiation and adaptation. While accepting the shifting economic alignment towards greater global integration, such studies point to the continuing importance of national politics and institutional arrangements for choices over the shape, direction and character of welfare policies:

> There are additional reasons why we should not exaggerate the degree to which global forces overdetermine the fate of national welfare states. One of the most powerful conclusions in comparative research is that political and institutional mechanisms of interest representation and political consensus-building matter tremendously in terms of managing welfare, employment and growth objectives. (Esping-Anderson, 1996: 6.)

Although the apocalyptic view of globalization is being modified in these arguments, some of the core assumptions about the character of globalization as a social force remain in place. While these political-institutionalist analyses have provided a valuable counterweight to the excesses of strong or apocalyptic theories of globalization, they nevertheless have some significant limitations. The following sections draw out three key problems with the institutionalist view of globalization and its relationship to welfare states/nation-states:

- the view of the state and its relationship to markets (or capital);
- the view of globalization as a deterritorialized force; and

- the view of globalization as an external or exogenous "pressure" on nation-states.

State versus Market: Another Failed Binary?

For both theoretical and political-cultural reasons, the political-institutionalist literature has tended to treat the state and the market as opposed principles of social co-ordination. This view underpins the conception of globalization as an external force acting on welfare states/nation-states. The power of capital and/or the extension of market relations are understood primarily as a challenge to the state. The state is seen as having developed as a countervailing power and influence to market failure and inequality. This juxtaposition is reflected in Esping-Anderson's (1990) influential view of the state as securing processes of *decommodification* in welfare (taking welfare benefits and services out of the commodified relations of the market). The juxtaposition of the state and market in this way embodies a social-democratic view of the state as a corrective to market processes (and the power of capital). In some respects, this view is the mirror image of neo-liberalism's representation of the market as hindered, blocked and distorted by the "interference" of the state.

There are both empirical and theoretical problems with this binary opposition. It occludes a long history of Marxist scholarship on the state's relationship to capital, for instance (see, inter alia, Ferguson, Lavalette and Mooney, 2002; Ginsburg, 1983; Gough, 1979; Offe, 1984). Marxist theorizations have ranged from seeing the state as "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie" (in Engels' phrase) to treating it as structurally bound to the "logic of capital." Other versions give priority to seeing the state as the (contradictory) site of political class struggle (and the temporary reconciliation of conflicting interests between labour and capital). Such studies have pointed to the ways in which the state is systematically implicated in the development of capital: securing the conditions of accumulation; institutionalizing and legitimating its core interests (not least in legal forms); and attempting to create the social and political conditions for new forms of capital accumulation (for example the "regulationist" approach: Jessop, 2002; Peck, 2001). These views suggest a more complicit, implicated or articulated view of the relationship between the state and capital than is visible in much of the globalization literature. They also indicate that capital may find some forms and functions of the state advantageous.

These theoretical possibilities are reflected in the compound relations that persist between states and dif-

ferent forms of capital (transnational as well as national-domestic). Surveying this field of relations between capital and the state (which may range from enthusiastic mutuality to grudging concessions), Yeates has argued that:

> The presentation of the state-capital relationship as one in which capital is essentially in conflict with the state, or hegemonic after defeating the state, is inaccurate. It posits capital always in opposition to the state, whereas it is more useful to see capital and state often allied together, as well as often in conflict....The presentation of capital acting without regulation is also inaccurate: it is bound in various webs of regulations and governance, which it accepts grudgingly, attempts to circumvent and which it very occasionally invites. Indeed transnational capital wishes to secure the support of the state, not to replace the state. (2001: 93)

There is a consistent problem in the study of globalization that occurs when "globalization-in-general"—the complex of new alignments of nations, regions and transnational agents linked in a series of flows, connections and disjunctures (Appadurai, 1996)—is not differentiated from the neo-liberal *strategy* of globalization.[3] This distinction is, of course, not an easy one, since the neo-liberal strategy has been profoundly influential in shaping "the global" in its image. Indeed, it forms the dominant tendency within globalization, but it is important to register that it is dominant in relation to other tendencies and possibilities—rather than being the sole form of globalization. Neo-liberalism is the "business agenda" of the dominant fractions of capital (in the financial and transnational extraction and manufacturing sectors). It is the "free trade" agenda adopted by neo-liberal governments, particularly the hegemonic U.S. It is the "Washington consensus" of markets, flexible labour and the diminished role of governments placed at the heart of the major supra-national institutions (the World Trade Organization, World Bank, etc.). But this is not the only "globalization." There are flows and conjunctures of people, ideas, cultures and politics that co-exist (more or less uncomfortably) with neo-liberal globalization in—and across—the same global space (Appadurai, 2001; Massey, 1999).

This neo-liberal strategy does have a strong anti-statist tendency that functions as a core rhetorical feature of neo-liberal discourse. However, we should probably be wary of taking neo-liberals at their word in a number of ways. Anti-statism in not the same as a wish to abolish the state—rather it involves what Jones and

Novak (1999) nicely term "retooling the state," reconfiguring it in a form more favourable to capital's current interests. It also seems necessary to caution against assuming that political strategies always work in practice (since there may be a few problems of implementation)—or that discourses describe the world (rather than being a means of trying to make the world conform). Too often, studies have been willing to treat the objectives of neo-liberalism as though they are outcomes. Instead, it may be analytically (and possibly politically) important to think of neo-liberalism as a strategy that struggles to overcome blockages, refusals, resistances and interruptions. These may be the socio-technical problems of "control at a distance" or the "nostalgic/traditional" reluctance of some people to give up valued habits, practices and spaces in the name of modernization, free trade or the new world order (see inter alia, Appadurai, 2001; Gupta, 1998). At the same time, it may be worth thinking about neo-liberal strategy as producing new blockages, refusals, resistances and contradictions of its own. These both get in the way of the successful implementation of its business plan—and call forth further "innovations" to overcome them (ranging from new information technologies to the use of military force, for example).

Differentiating neo-liberal globalization from other processes and relationships makes it possible to see that the "state versus market" focus may have obscured other relationships—and changes. One of the domains obscured by this focus is the domestic, private or familial realm and its articulations with both the market and the state in the production and consumption of welfare—and in the construction of types of "welfare subjects" (see Lewis, G., 2000). There is a substantial literature challenging both political-economy and political-institutionalist studies for their omission of gender relations or for bolting them on as "residual" categories (see, for example, Langan and Ostner, 1990; Lewis, J., 2000; Orloff, 1993; Williams, 1995). The way that attention to socio-economic groupings (or "classes") has obscured gender relations mirrors the way that the state-market focus obscures the private-domestic-familial realm. This is not surprising since the private/public dichotomy is densely interwoven with gender distinctions—both historically and in its contemporary reformulations (Gordon, 1994; Hall, 1998; Kingfisher, 2002). Nevertheless, the role of the private realm (rather than the private sector) in the production and consumption of welfare disrupts the conception of welfare as constituted on an axis of commodification-decommodification that is located in the state-market distinction (see Cochrane,

Clarke and Gewirtz, 2001). It is one more reason for escaping the analytic confines of the state versus market binary and there are echoes here of Ong's (1999) approach to thinking about the intersection of bio-poliitcal, capital accumulation and state regimes in the construction and regulation of "flexible citizenship."

Turning Inside Out: Globalization and Nation-States

At this point, I want to return to another analytic construct that political-economic and political-institutionalist approaches share: the conception of globalization as an external or exogenous force in relation to welfare states/nation-states. While political-economic analyses see globalization as dissolving the borders and capacities of nation-states, political-institutionalist approaches see nation-states as the locus of adaptation to the external pressures of globalization. This conception of globalization as an external or exogenous force rests on two rather unreliable views of spatial formation. First, it juxtaposes the apparently solidly rooted, territorialized, space of nation-states with the mobile, transient and deterritorialized flows of global capital. This juxtaposition overstates both the geographical solidity of nation-states, and the fluidity of capital. As a number of authors have demonstrated, even the most mobile forms of capital (in the finance sector) require "places": to be materialized, to be traded, to be serviced, to be managed and so on:

> The global economy cannot be taken simply as given, whether that is given as a set of markets or a function of the power of multinational corporations. To the contrary, the global economy is something that has to be actively implemented, reproduced, serviced and financed...global-economic features like hypermobility and time-space compression are not self-generative. They need to be produced, and such a feat of production requires capital fixity...,vast concentrations of very material and not so mobile facilities and infrastructures. (Sassen, 2001: 262)

At the same time, nation-states are both more permeable and changeable than the view of them being territorially solidly rooted would allow. This leads us to the second problem about the spatial character of nation-states. The "external pressure/internal adaptation" conception of welfare state change *mis-places* globalization. While globalization involves flows, relationships and institutions that take place "outside" particular nation-states (from transnational corporations to the World Bank) as well as processes that traverse nation-states;

these processes, relationships and institutions are also materialised within the borders of nation-states. Corporate headquarters, production and distribution systems, call centres, inter/transnational agencies are all territorially embodied within nation-states (Yeates, 2001). So, too, are the outputs, products and "consumables" of global capitalism. These products may "change places," carrying specific material products and cultural formations to be used or appropriated in new locales. But the producers and consumers are located within (a variety of) territorial boundaries. Sassen captures the spatial complexity of these changes by suggesting that the new alignments (in this case of financial sector organizations) are partial and multiple:

> Such firms' activities are simultaneously partly deterritorialized and partly deeply territorialized; they span the globe, yet they are strategically concentrated in specific places....The strategic geography of this distribution fluidly traverses borders and spaces while installing itself in key cities. It is a geography that explodes conventional notions of context and traditional hierarchies of scale. It does so, in part, through the unbundling of national territory. We can therefore understand the global economy as materializing in a worldwide grid of strategic places, uppermost among which are major international business and financial centers. (2001: 271)

As a result, the "external pressure/internal adaptation" model tries to sustain a distinction that limits our capacity to understand the spatial realignments associated with globalization. It is possible to see fractions of capital that are already (or wish to be) international or transnational *within* the "national" space of nation-states. It is possible to see political blocs that propound the necessity or desirability of becoming "global" *within* the "national" political formation. And it is possible to see "national" citizens who actively seek aspects of international, transnational and global politics and culture (from international aid, through transnational political alliances to baseball caps). Indeed, to take one example, one might argue that the U.K. has been dominated by alliances of capital and neo-liberal/globalizing political blocs, as well as providing a ready consumer market for American cultural forms and symbols. Of course, pointing to the U.K. being "dominated by" such neo-liberal/Atlanticist orientations is not the same as suggesting that these trends represent the whole of the "nation." Refusals of the neo-liberal global imaginary are articulated in a variety of names (the nation; Europe; the environment; tradition, culture, and so on).

Nevertheless, the overriding point here is that globalization is not a disembodied and external condition, but is materialized within nation-states (though differently in particular national settings).

The global-national distinction is also reflected in a conception of differentiated national political-institutional forms threatened by a homogenizing globalization. Political-institutionalist analyses often treat nation-states as having distinct and differentiated internal political-institutional trajectories, these are counterposed to the homogenous and homogenizing trajectory of globalization. I want to argue instead, that as national economic, social and political formations are being realigned in a new configuration of global relations, they are subject to both homogenizing and differentiating pressures. On the one hand they are under pressure to conform to (more or less explicit and institutionalized) demands of neo-liberal models of global political economy, or to the conditions of insertion into regional economic-political blocs, such as the European Union. On the other hand, they are under pressures to have a distinct, and differentiated, trading, cultural and political identity: a "place in the world." Hudson and Williams, for example, have argued that the "economic" integration of the EU contains dynamics of both homogenization and differentiation:

> ...these changes in the character of the EU can also be regarded as bringing about a homogenization of its space, seeking to establish the free play of capitalist social relations over its entirety. At the same time, giving wider and freer play to market forces has led to increasing territorial differentiation within the EU. Seemingly paradoxical, these processes of homogenization are enhancing the significance of differences between places in influencing the locations of economic activities and the quality of people's lives within Europe. (1999: 8)

Both of these types of pressure intersect with, and are articulated by, "internal" or domestic economic, cultural and political blocs. Both are global in scope, and not just European. In this section, I have tried to suggest that "external/internal" conception of globalization's relationship to welfare states/nation-states obscures some of the crucial dynamics of both globalization and the trajectories of nation-states. In the following section, I want to go further to examine the implications for the place of nation-states within the study of social policy.

Unsettled Formations: Nations, States and Welfare

Viewing globalization as an internal as well as an external dynamic in relation to nation states/welfare states underscores the increased salience of borders in the contemporary world (Leontidou and Afouxenidis, 1998). The interpenetration or mingling of the "national" and the "global" discussed above indicate the permeability of national borders—although this is uneven (in different places, in relation to different sorts of object and people). In particular, the current globalization involve new forms and trajectories of mobility of people (as migrations, diasporas, nomadism: see, inter alia, Brah, 1997; Castles, 2000; Cohen, 1997; Gilroy, 1993). These mobilities call into question the (assumed) unity of nation-states and the "peoples" that inhabit them. Nations—and their borders—are also on the move, as nations and states fragment, realign or are created anew. Neither the solidity nor the stability of nation-states can be taken for granted politically or analytically.

This is a particular problem for the subject of social policy, since the nation-state is a foundational concept (see Clarke, 1996). It is also a concept whose provenance, applicability and stability are largely taken for granted within the subject. The nation-state provides the unacknowledged back drop for most "national" studies of social policies, politics and ideologies—the metaphorical and literal "terrain" on which such conflicts and developments take place. It is also the elementary unit of analysis for comparative social policy that underpins the exploration of the (more or less) divergent models, principles, institutions and (more recently) trajectories of national welfare systems (see, for example, Alcock and Craig, 2001; Clasen, 1999; Cochrane, Clarke and Gewirtz, 2001; Esping-Anderson, 1996). The growing attention to trends, transitions and trajectories marks a shift away from the dominance of static typologies (as the classification of difference) within comparative social policy. It reflects an attempt to capture the dynamics of welfare state change—reform, restructuring, retrenchment, resistance and so on—but it does so in ways that leave the foundational concept of the nation-state in place. This underestimates how the nation-state itself is implicated in the dynamics of destabilization and realignment. Appadurai has argued that one of the key sites of these dynamics is the nation-state itself:

> It has now become something of a truism that we are functioning in a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion. These objects include ideas and

ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques. This is a world of flows....It is also, of course, a world of structures, organizations and other stable social forms. But the apparent stabilities that we see are, under close examination, usually our devices for handling objects characterized by motion. The greatest of these apparently stable objects is the nation-state, which is today frequently characterized by floating populations, transnational politics within national borders, and mobile configurations of technology and expertise. (2001: 5)

Here we are offered an approach to the nation-state that sees it as traversed by different—and disjunctured—flows whose effect is to unsettle or de-stabilize its apparent stability and solidity. Indeed, Akhil Gupta has argued that this attention to dislocations may enable us to escape the forlorn debate for or against the "disappearance of the nation-state." This binary choice, he suggests, may "be missing the point" because "one can often point to persuasive evidence that leads to both conclusions for the same cases" (1998: 319). As with Sassen's view of global cities noted above, the processes unsettling the nation-state may be partial and multiple. But it is worth re-tracing some steps backwards here, since there is a distinction to be made between a view of the nation-state as once solid and stable, and now unsettled; and a view of it as always contingent, constructed and potentially unstable. The former view treats the present situation as a break from the historical certainties of nation-states: instability is seen as a feature of the current period. The latter view sees those certainties—Appadurai's "apparent stability"—as social and political accomplishments in at least two senses. First, they have always been constructions in the face of the contending and conflicting forces that consistently threaten to destabilise nation-states. Second, they are myths or imaginaries constructed in the face of the empirical instabilities of nation-states. The historical experience of most nation-states has not been that of stable borders, territorial integrity and a solidified national identity. On the contrary, borders have proved highly mobile, nations and states have chopped and changed, and national identities have been invented, and reinvented, regularly. For large parts of the world, colonial relations have meant that all the features supposedly associated with nation-state formation have been denied or distorted by the operations of colonial economic, cultural and political power. Even the "model" European nation-states (and "Europe" itself) can be usefully viewed as the outcomes of elaborate and contested processes of construction:

involving spatial and cultural instabilities, nation-building and rebuilding, and the occasional war (see, for example, Christiansen, Jorgensen and Wiener, 2001; Fink, Lewis and Clarke, 2001; Hudson and Williams, 1999; Jonsson, Tagil and Tornqvist, 2000).

These model nation-states were supposedly marked by "territorial integrity." However, the integrity of most European nation-states rested on the critical interpenetration of colonial places with metropolitan cores—not a solidified economic, cultural and political unity, but an ensemble of dispersed economic, cultural and political relations that enabled the imaginary of the sovereign, unified nation-state. This imaginary has been central to the social sciences. As Sassen puts it: "Much of social science has operated with the assumption of the nation-state as a container, representing a unified spatiotemporality. Much of history, however, has failed to confirm this assumption" (2001: 261). Treating the nation-state as a unified block gets in the way of understanding how contemporary processes are reshaping both nations and states—and unsettling the "hyphen" between nation and state which naturalizes their conjunction:

> That this curiously hyphenated entity, the nation-state, does not evoke constant surprise is a testimony to its complete ideological hegemony. Scholarly work has tended to underestimate seriously the importance of that hyphen, which simultaneously erases and naturalizes what is surely an incidental coupling.... (Gupta, 1998: 316-7)

In his discussion of the "postcolonial condition," Gupta makes elegant use of this "hyphen" between nation and state—and its destabilization. He argues that its unsettling reveals the contingently constructed coupling of nation and state, such that they become capable of being treated (analytically *and* politically) as separable. More importantly, he suggests that the unsettling of the hyphen puts in play new social tensions and forces:

> The hyphen between nation and state holds together a particular bundle of phenomena that are increasingly in tension. It is this that makes the "postcolonial condition" different from the order of nation-states brought together by colonialism and nationalism. (1998: 327)

Within the processes of globalization, we have seen struggles to abolish nations—and states (in the break-up of the former Soviet Union); to create, or recreate nations (from within the former Eastern bloc and in Africa); to detach nations and "peoples" from states (in

the former Yugoslavia; in Kurdish struggles for autonomy); to claim and internalize territory with nations (e,g., the disputed space of Kashmir) and to dismantle former unities of nations-and-states (as in the move to devolution in the United Kingdom). Much of this comes on top of earlier waves of territorial-political realignments across the relations of the "West and the rest" in the form of (partial, unfinished) de-colonization and the consequent insertion of de-colonized nations into the new global political economy. Such complex and multiple processes can hardly be grasped in the debate about the "end of the nation-state." Rather, we may need to pay attention to unfinished, partial and conflictual processes of "unsettling" and attempts at "resettling"—the construction of (temporarily) stabilized new formations.[4] Gupta argues that

> What I would like to suggest is that there is a growing tension between nation and states so that the particular enclosure that was conjured by their historically fortuitous conjunction may be slowly falling apart....The kinds of activities and meanings that were brought together by nation-states—the regulation of industries, goods and people; the control and surveillance of populations; the provision of "security" with respect to other nation-states...; the employment of laws; the feeling of belonging to "a people"; the belief in particular historical narratives of identity and difference—may be untangling....It is very likely that they will reconstitute themselves into different bundles. But it is highly unlikely that the reconstituted entities will simply be reproduction of nation-states, writ large or small. (1998: 318).

The contemporary politics of "welfare reform" take place on a ground where established conceptions of people, nation and state have become unsettled and contested. The unsettling of the nation-state hyphen is accelerated by the increasing flows of people across borders and the compound configurations of attachments, identity and social relations that they construct in those flows. Migration, tourism, a mobile business class and nomadism change the relationships between people and places. Social relations (of family and friendship); identities (of ethnicity, religion and local-ness) and politico-cultural affinities traverse space—connecting different places of living and attachment (e.g., Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001). For studies of social policy, transnational "chains of care" are increasingly significant as migrant women perform waged care work in the West, while using those wages to support families (and even buy care) "at home" (e.g., Hochschild, 2001).

I have tried to use anthropological conceptions of globalization and the postcolonial to open up the welfare state/nation-state complex that is so central to comparative studies of social policy. Thinking of (temporarily) stabilised formations of nation-state-welfare being unsettled enables us to see ways through the binary choice between globalization and nation-states. More generally, examining these unsettled relationships between place, people and nation, and nation, state and welfare allow us to understand why questions of citizenship have become so significant.

Citizenship in Flux

Citizenship is one of the critical sites around which these instabilities coalesce. This is hardly surprising since citizenship is a status formed in the construction and development of hyphenated nation-states and the relationships with their "people." Citizenship articulates the twin couplets nation-state and welfare-state. Like the nation-state, citizenship has been historically "naturalized" in a number of ways. It has rested on a taken-for-granted assumption about the equivalence of the nation-state, territorial boundaries and "membership" of the nation—though, as Lewis argues, this nation may be an "imperial nation" (with "membership" unevenly and differentially spread beyond the national space, Lewis, 1998: 135-143). It has typically presumed a natural fit between nation, people and "race"—treating them as co-terminous, and mutually reinforcing, categories. It has also been the site in which "univeralism" and structures of subordination, marginalization and exclusion have been articulated (see, inter alia, Lewis, 1998; Lister, 1997). The white, male, able-bodied, wage-earning subject has been the typical "universal citizen" of Western welfare capitalism—the "independent" figure able to claim and enact legal, political and social rights. Around him are a range of structurally differentiated "incomplete" subjects (placed by age, gender, disability and "race"-ethnicity-nationality) whose access to citizenship and its rights is more conditional, marginal secondary—or who may simply be excluded.

Not surprisingly, then, citizenship is a highly contested status (Lister, 1997). It has been the focus of struggles within nation-states that have challenged the rights and services it provides and that have challenged the conditions of "membership." The former have sought to extend, increase and enrich the rights of citizens and the substance of the benefits and services to which citizenship provides access (from improved and less conditional benefits through to adequate standards of care and support). The latter have sought to redefine who is entitled to be counted as a citizen—extending the social range of "universalism" to those marginalized, excluded or subordinated by dominant definitions (and, in the process, transforming the substance of the "universal"). For these struggles, the imagery of "second class citizens" has been a powerful rhetorical figure for defining and challenging inequalities and the practices of discriminatory subordination. In practice, struggles over the content of welfare and over membership both overlap and lead to further innovation in the conception of what welfare might or should mean (see, for example, Williams, 2000). For example, challenges from the disability movement around "independence" contain a struggle about membership and conflicts over the level, conditions and character of benefits and services, while raising new possibilities about what the "independent and autonomous" citizen, so central to liberal theory, might mean in practice (Shakespeare, 2000).

These continuing challenges (and the resistances to them) have intersected with the cultural and political forces brought into play by the instabilities around the "hyphenated" nation-state. At least three dimensions stand out in this process. The first centres on *the tension between nation-states and other levels of governance* in sub- and supra-national institutions and processes (see, inter alia, Clarke, 2001b; Delanty, 2000; and Geyer, 2000). Questions of membership, authority and rights are now posed in and across multiple settings—allowing the possibility of challenges being mounted "beyond" the nation-state (for example, through the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights). The "internalization" of European Human Rights legislation within the legal systems of member-states provides a further instance of the shifting relations of "inside and outside" of nation-states. Some authors have posed the question of whether forms of "transnational citizenship" are imaginable at the point where new institutional jurisdictions coincide with migration, mobility and "detachment" from the singular territory of a nation-state (Delanty, 2000; Soysal, 1994). Ong's exploration of "flexible citizenship" in the Chinese diaspora raises question about how people negotiate multiple attachments in a world in which formations of nation, state, capital and family are being realigned—often into new combinations characterized by what Althusser called "teeth-gritting harmony."

The second dimension focuses on the *conflicts between varieties of mutli-culturalism and varieties of nationalism* in the struggle over national identity within and beyond the nation-state (see, inter alia, Calhoun, 1997; Cohen, 1999; Hesse, 2000a). The conjunction of

postcolonialism (or what Hesse calls the "unrealized, incomplete and interrupted postcolonial settlements," 2000b: 13) and multiple migrations creates an "identity problem" within nations and states (see, for example, Parekh, 2000; and the Home Office, 2001). This issue is variously named as "diversity," "inclusion," "cohesion," "difference," "multiethnicity" and "multiculturalism" (Hall, 2000; Lewis, 2000b). This identity problem—the unsettling of the naturalized equivalences between nation, people and race—is the site of intense conflicts as the trajectory from the colonial to the postcolonial meets old and new migrations. The challenges posed by such changes encounter attempted reconciliations around the liberal democratic imaginary of British/European "tolerance" and a "modern" sensibility of pluralism (see, for example, Baubock, Heller and Zolberg, 1996, on pluralism and Marfleet, 1999, on views of Europe as "civilizing force"). Gupta argues that the unsettling of the hyphenated nation-state is the site for regressive political-cultural projects:

> To suggest that the particular historical conjuncture that brought "nation" and "state" together into a stable form of spatial organization may be coming to an end is not to argue that forms of "nation-ness" and "state-ness" are in danger of disappearing altogether. New, more menacing, racially exclusionary forms of national identity are emerging in Europe and the United States, for example (1998: 319; see also Castles, 2000; and Cohen, 1999).

The third dimension hinges on the *tension between the "withdrawal" or "retreat" of the state, and the increasing claims to citizenship and citizenship rights.* The developments discussed in the preceding paragraphs have created growing demands for and of citizenship. New claims are being made upon states to recognize "other" citizens and their needs/rights, alongside pressures to deliver adequate levels of benefits and services in appropriate forms. These claims encounter the state's wish to create more autonomous, independent, active or self-provisioning citizens. Neo-liberal, neo-conservative and communitarian discourses share a concern to reduce the state's "interference" in the workings of markets, families and communities. Blom Hansen and Stepputat have drawn attention to the paradox "that while the authority of the state is being constantly questioned and functionally undermined, there are growing pressures to confer full-fledged rights and entitlements on ever more citizens" (2001: 2). One effect is that benefits and services, in the Anglophone countries especially, become the targets for new practices of rationing, new

forms of conditionality, and programs of devolution, decentralization and privatization. Similarly "citizens" are the focus of attempts to "remake" them as responsible parents, active citizens and flexible workers (U.S. experiences are well surveyed in Goode and Maskovsky, 2001). Simultaneously, the shift to more "mixed" or "plural" economies of welfare provision disperses, and may fragment, the agencies responsible for organizing and delivering welfare—putting them "at arm's length" from the state (Clarke and Newman, 1997; Hoggett, 1996). In the process—and despite the demands of citizens and would-be citizens—the state becomes more elusive and more evasive in relation to the social or welfare rights of citizens (an arm's length being about the distance of deniability). The withdrawal of the state is not just about formal arrangements or a generalized reduction in provisioning—it has specific social dynamics that transfer costs, pressures and responsibilities in unequal ways (Clarke and Newman, 1997: 141-59; see Kingfisher, 2002, on the gendered dynamics of neo-liberal welfare "reform"). In these different ways, citizenship (as the point of articulation between nation-state-welfare) remains one of the central sites of current political and cultural conflict.

Unsettling Conversations

In this article I have tried to use encounters with anthropology to aid the process of rethinking conventional views of the relationship between globalization and welfare states. The idea of "unsettling" plays a double role in this process. It reflects the orientation of anthropological writing on globalization and nation-states that escapes the confines of a binary categorization of the global and the national. This concern with the destabilization or unsettling of previously taken-for-granted formations of nation, state (and, I would add, welfare) is profoundly important for thinking through the contradictory tendencies that both contribute to, and are put in play in, the unsettling of welfare states/nation-states. It also enables us to think about the different projects that aim to resettle or realign people, welfare and states in new formations. But secondly, the process of academic border-crossing (to borrow from anthropologists) is itself "unsettling"—in that it destabilizes foundational concepts in the "home" discipline. Social policy has worked with ideas of the "welfare state," underpinned by the nation-state model. Unsettling those conceptual formations is a core part of "rethinking" the subject, and is aided by trans-disciplinary encounters.

For me, the (selective) encounter with anthropology has three very valuable outcomes. The first is the

capacity to rethink the welfare state/nation-state complex in a shifting global context, without being caught by either apocalyptic political-economy or inertial political-institutional analysis. The second is that anthropology's insistence on the local and the particular breaks up the persistent enthusiasm of social scientists for "grand narratives"—whether globalization, neo-liberalism, individualization or modernization. Attention to the particular clearly does not deny transnational, international or supra-national processes, but it does require thinking about how they are enacted, instantiated and lived (Lem and Leach, 2002). In terms of "welfare reform," for example, attention to the particular can illuminate the diverse incarnations of an apparently coherent political strategy (see Kingfisher, 2002, on neo-liberal welfare reform). The particular can also reveal some of the incoherence, contradictions and tensions of dominant strategies (see, for example, Hyatt, 2001, on the recruitment of "active citizens"). Finally, the particular can allow us to see some of the refusals, resistance and recalcitrance that are in play when subjects are summoned by power. This is, I hope, not a romantic view of resistance as counter-politics, but a concern with the limits and limitations of dominant strategies. New subjects do not always come when they are called. Indeed, they might not hear the call, they might not recognize themselves as its subject, or they might just answer back in a different voice (see Holland and Lave, 2001, on dialogism and contentious practices). When I go back to social policy, this is the "good sense" of anthropology that I want to take with me. But the third outcome of these encounters is a commitment to staying mobile—to creating the conditions for more "unsettling" conversations because of the ways in which they help us to think—and to think again.

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Notes

1 In this and other respects, this article draws on collaborative work with my colleagues at the Open University which places a premium on "rethinking" (see, for example, Lewis, Gewirtz and Clarke, 2000; and Fink, Lewis and Clarke, 2002). This article was originally a paper for a panel, organized by Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky at the CASCA/SANA conference in 2002 at the University of Windsor. I am grateful to the organizers and other session participants (Karen Brodsky, Dana-Ain Davis and Ida Susser) and many other people at the conference for making the "border crossing" a rewarding experience. Finally, the positive and thoughtful comments from the *Anthropologica* reviewers helped with the revision of the paper to this form.

2 The significance of this cluster is reflected in recent studies of neo-liberalism and welfare that have foregrounded combinations of Anglophone nations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and U.S.)—see, for example, Kingfisher (2002), O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver (1999) and Peck (2001). There are, however, problems about generalizing about neo-liberalism as a project from these examples, since other welfare systems reveal different political formations and trajectories (see, for example, Alcock and Craig, 2001; Huber and Stephens, 2001; Kuhnle, 2000 and Sykes, Palier and Prior, 2001; Taylor-Gooby, 2001). The blurring of boundaries between national, international and transnational formations poses significant challenges for the comparative analysis of welfare states, given its conventional focus on nation-states.

3 In the analysis of globalization, many writers have argued for the importance of distinguishing "neo-liberal globalization" from other globalizing processes and relationships. Neo-liberalism forms a distinctive strategy for global economic realignment and for the reform of national political institutions, including the welfare/state relationship. There are some commonalities here between political economy views of neo-liberalism (as the institutional incarnation of global capital) and post-structuralist/Foucauldian views of neo-liberal governmentality. Both tend to abstract the "pure form" from its practice in particular settings. Neo-liberalism is rarely enacted as a pure form—rather it takes political shape in compound forms (Clarke, 2001c; O'Malley, forthcoming; see also Kingfisher, 2002). Viewing welfare state reform only from the strategic standpoint of neo-liberalism obscures vital alliances, resistances and contradictions in the project of welfare state reform. Programs of "welfare reform" in the U.S. and the U.K., for example, indicate the importance of looking at neo-liberalism's articulations with neo-conservatism, particularly around the intersection of welfare and racialised and gendered formations. The U.K. example suggests exploring the ways in which neo-liberalism is articulated with both "residual" and "emergent" forms of social democracy (Clarke, 2004).

4 I have added the idea of "unsettling" to those of "untangling" or "unbundling" partly because recent work around welfare states has made use of the idea of "settlements" and the ways in which they have become unsettled (see, for example, Clarke and Newman, 1997; Hughes and Lewis, 1998; Lister, 2002). However, it also captures something of the dynamic view of the state expressed in Gramsci's conception of a "series of unstable equilibria," which I have found valuable as a way of thinking about the achievement of (apparent) stability and its capacity for falling apart.

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Image de la royauté sacrée dans *Le Roi Lion.* Étude d'anthropologie historique et politique

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Résumé : Depuis Max Weber jusqu'à l'École dite de *Leyde*, les recherches anthropologiques ont mis en évidence un certain nombre de constantes politiques, sociologiques, économiques et idéologiques qui caractérisent les États dits *primitifs* ou *archaïques*; plus récemment, certains travaux en histoire ancienne et en archéologie ont adopté ce modèle herméneutique. Or la plupart des traits ainsi révélés apparaissent dans le film *Le Roi Lion* des studios Walt Disney. L'analyse montrera ainsi que les représentations idéologiques de la royauté et la réalité du pouvoir sur les êtres et sur le territoire ne doivent rien au hasard, et qu'elles participent d'une vision prémoderne de l'État.

Mots-clés : *Roi Lion*, État archaïque, Antiquité, légitimation, pouvoir, Weber, École de Leyde (Leiden)

Abstract: From Max Weber to the school called *Leyde*, anthropological studies pointed to certain number of political, sociological economical and ideological characteristics of early States; later, a certain number of studies in ancient history and in archaeology adopted this hermeneutic model. Most of these traits are present in Walt Disney Studios' film *Lion King*. The analysis shows that ideological representations of royalty and the substance of power over beings and territory are not random selections but belong to a premodern view of the State.

Keywords: Lion King, Archaic State, Antiquity, legitimization, power, Weber, School of Leiden

Depuis longtemps les formes qu'a prises l'État ont fait l'objet de l'attention des ethnologues, des historiens et des sociologues, voire de philosophes. Déjà Étienne de la Boétie, dans son *Discours de la servitude volontaire ou Contr'un*, se demandait comment cet événement majeur – et à ses yeux regrettable – de l'histoire de l'humanité que constitue l'apparition de l'État, et qu'il appelle la *Malencontre*, avait pu se produire. Un courant récent des recherches anthropologiques et archéologiques s'est plus particulièrement attaché à décrire, définir et analyser les formes primitives de l'État (pour la recherche archéologique, voir, entre autres, Cherry, 1978; Flannery, 1998; Gledhill, 1988 : 23-25; Peebles et Kus, 1977; Ruby 1999; Trigger, 1974). Un des plus grands savants du tournant des XIXe et XXe siècles, Max Weber, y a consacré une bonne part de ses efforts afin de comprendre quelles étaient les prémisses des États «prébureaucratiques» qui pourraient expliquer l'émergence de l'État moderne «rationnel». Depuis les années 1970 (voir l'article fondateur de Carneiro, 1970), les chercheurs se sont beaucoup interrogés sur ce concept et ont élaboré des catégories et des modèles (*Patterns*) anthropologiques extrêmement utiles pour les historiens des civilisations antiques. A côté du concept corollaire de «Chefferie»/*Chiefdom* (voir Carneiro, 1981; Earle, 1991; Flemming, 1973), l'«État primitif» ou «État archaïque» (*Early State* ou *Archaic State*) est devenu un modèle opératoire dans les travaux d'anthropologie sociale (voir les titres des ouvrages de Claessen et Skalnik, 1978 et Feinman et Marcus, 1998). Il constitue une catégorie conceptuelle qui paraît avoir une valeur herméneutique indéniable. C'est sur ces concepts forgés par la recherche sociologique et anthropologique, et adoptés par certains chercheurs en histoire, qu'est fondée cette analyse du dessin animé bien connu des studios Walt Disney, *le Roi Lion*. On verra que cette œuvre de fiction, a priori sans prétention savante, véhicule implicitement des modèles anthropologiques généraux,

1

qui ont trait à la royauté primitive et sacrée dans les États prébureaucratiques ou archaïques et pour lesquels de nombreux parallèles pris dans l'histoire ancienne peuvent être proposés.

Résumé de l'histoire

Le roi Muphasa et la reine Sarabi viennent d'avoir un fils, Simba; et l'histoire s'ouvre par la présentation officielle du nouveau-né[1], l'héritier légitime du trône, à tout le peuple des animaux rassemblés[2] devant le «Rocher des Lions» (*Pride Rock*). La cérémonie est présidée par le vieux sage, Rafiki, un Mandrill ou un Babouin. Celui-ci oint d'abord le front du prince avec de l'huile tirée d'une calebasse, puis avec du sable pris sur la crinière du roi Muphasa. Le Babouin brandit alors le jeune prince devant les animaux prosternés. Seul le frère de Muphasa, Scar, est absent de la cérémonie; il se fait d'ailleurs tancer par le secrétaire/majordome du roi, Zazu, un calao (*hornbill*), puis par Muphasa lui-même. Les personnages sont ainsi campés. L'histoire, le drame, peut commencer. Un matin Muphasa montre à son fils toute l'étendue de son royaume lui interdisant de se rendre vers un point sombre de l'horizon qui constitue la limite de la «Terre des lions» (*Pride Lands*). C'est par une indiscrétion volontaire de son oncle que Simba apprend qu'il s'agit d'un cimetière d'éléphants. Le premier soin de Simba est bien sûr de tromper la vigilance maternelle et celle de Zazu, et de s'y rendre en compagnie de son amie Nala. C'est là qu'ils sont agressés par une bande de hyènes stipendiée par Scar. L'attaque tourne court suite à une intervention opportune de Muphasa lui-même. Cependant Scar ne se tient pas pour battu. Il tend un autre piège à Simba et à Muphasa; et, en voulant sauver son fils du déferlement d'un troupeau de gnous, Muphasa est précipité dans le canyon par son frère Scar, et il meurt piétiné. Scar accuse Simba d'être responsable de la mort de son père et ordonne au lionceau de s'enfuir immédiatement. Il lance les hyènes à sa poursuite, mais Simba échappe à leur traque et quitte la Terre des Lions. Scar annonce la mort du roi et du prince aux lionnes et prend le pouvoir aidé par les bandes de hyènes. Pendant ce temps, Simba a failli périr dans le désert et a été recueilli par deux vagabonds au grand coeur, Pumbaa, le phacochère, et Timon, la mangouste (*meerkat*). Il va vivre avec eux en proscrit dans la jungle, se nourrissant de larves et d'insectes. C'est là qu'il va grandir dans l'insouciance et atteindre l'âge adulte; jusqu'au jour où il rencontre Nala, son amie d'enfance, qui chasse dans la forêt. Celle-ci lui explique que Scar et les hyènes font régner la terreur sur la Terre des

Lions. Elle supplie Simba de rentrer pour sauver le royaume. Celui-ci hésite, écrasé par le poids de sa responsabilité supposée dans la mort de Muphasa. La nuit suivante, Rafiki, le babouin, s'en vient trouver Simba et lui montre, dans l'eau d'une mare, l'ombre de son père et, dans les étoiles, sa silhouette qui l'admoneste. Naguère, en effet, en lui prodiguant ses conseils et ses enseignements, Muphasa avait dit à son fils que, parmi les étoiles qui brillent dans le ciel, se trouvaient leurs ancêtres qui veillaient sur eux, et que lui-même, après sa mort, serait là également pour guider Simba. Celui-ci prend alors la décision d'assumer son destin et revient sur la Terre des Lions, où il reprend le pouvoir avec l'aide des lionnes qui livrent combat contre les hyènes. Scar finit dévoré par elles. Avec le règne de Simba revient la prospérité. Simba épouse Nala; et le film se termine sur le Rocher des Lions avec la présentation, par Rafiki au peuple des animaux, de Chaka, le fils de Simba et Nala.

Analyse

Deux séries d'études socio-anthropologiques, diverses par la date et la méthode, nous fourniront les bases théoriques nécessaires pour appréhender la nature des institutions politiques et idéologiques mise en œuvre dans cette fiction et qui servent de cadre à cette trame dramatique : ces études sont celles de Max Weber (1972; 1922) et celles dues à ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler l'Ecole de Leyde, réunie autour de H.J.M. Claessen (en particulier Claessen, 1991; Claessen et Oosten, 1996; Claessens et Skalnik, 1978; 1981).

Max Weber a (presque) mené à bien une énorme entreprise de classification des phénomènes sociologiques sous le titre *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie (Économie et société. Fondements d'une sociologie compréhensive)* restée en chantier à sa mort en 1920, mais dont certains chapitres, sous forme de brouillon, ont été colligés par sa veuve dans une édition posthume (1e éd. 1921); à cette monumentale étude, il faut ajouter un important article paru dans les *Preussische Jahrbücher* de 1922. Weber a notamment étudié les formes d'États antiques et/ou primitifs et les a classés en trois grandes catégories selon le type de domination (*Herrschaft*) dont se réclament les «dominants» : ce sont les dominations légale-bureaucratique, traditionnelle et charismatique. La première correspond à l'État moderne bureaucratique. Ce sont donc surtout les deux dernières qui nous intéressent ici. Il s'agit là bien sûr de «types idéaux» (*Idealtypus[en]*), concept herméneutique forgé par Weber lui-même; ils sont «idéaux» en ceci qu'ils ne se trouvent jamais à l'état

pur dans la réalité historique, mais que toujours ils sont mêlés à des phénomènes qui relèvent des autres formes. La définition de la domination traditionnelle est la suivante : «On désignera une domination comme *traditionnelle* lorsque sa légitimité est fondée, et qu'elle est considérée comme telle, sur la base de la sainteté de dispositions (*Ordnungen*) existant depuis toujours et des pouvoirs du seigneur. Le seigneur (ou plusieurs seigneurs) sont [*sic*] déterminés en vertu d'une règle transmise par la tradition. On lui obéit en fonction d'une dignité personnelle qui lui est conférée par la tradition» (1972 : 130; voir aussi 1922 : 3; pour des exemples historiques de domination patrimoniale : Weber, 1972 : 607-624)[3]. Tandis que «Nous appellerons *charisme* la qualité extraordinaire...d'une personnalité qui est pour ainsi dire douée de forces ou de particularités surnaturelles ou surhumaines, ou du moins spécifiquement extraordinaires, inaccessibles à tout autre; ou encore qui est considéré comme envoyé par Dieu ou comme un modèle, et donc comme un guide (*Führer*)....La reconnaissance par ceux qui sont dominés...décide de la valeur du charisme» (Weber, 1972 : 140; *cf.* 1922 : 6-9)[4]. Dans les États antiques et primitifs, les deux formes, tradition et charisme, sont souvent mêlées dans des proportions variables (pour une mise en perspective anthropologique des travaux de Weber sur les États archaïques, voir notamment Bakker, 1988 et Miller, Rowlands and Tilley, 1989 : 3-7).

L'ouvrage édité par H.J.M. Claessen et P. Skalnik et intitulé *The Early State* (1978) rassemble des études de vingt et un cas d'États primitifs pris dans diverses régions de la planète et à différents moments de l'histoire (à compléter par Claessen, 1991 : étude de cinq cas). Les deux coéditeurs tentent d'en dégager des constantes qui permettraient de définir cette catégorie anthropologique. Leur tentative, qui s'appuie parfois sur celles de Weber (par exemple, Claessen, 1991 : 324-326), a depuis trouvé plusieurs prolongements dans diverses publications collectives (Claessen et Skalnik, 1981 et Claessen et Oosten, 1996). Par la confrontation structurale de ces États primitifs (Claessen, 1978), H.J.M. Classen entend montrer qu'il existe bel et bien un modèle (*pattern*), ce que Max Weber aurait appelé un idéaltype, de l'*Early State*. La définition qu'il en donne est la suivante : c'est «l'organization socio-politique centralisée destinée à réguler les relations sociales au sein d'une société stratifiée complexe, qui est divisée en au moins deux strates fondamentales ou classes sociales émergentes – c'est-à-dire les gouvernants et les gouvernés –, dont les relations sont caractérisées par la domination politique des premiers et l'obligation tributaire des seconds, légitimées par une idéologie commune dont

la réciprocité est le principe de base» (Claessen, 1981 : 59; pour des remarques de méthode, voir Claessen, 1978 : 533-537). Dans les vingt et un cas étudiés, on observe «un étonnant degré d'uniformisation dans la structure des *Early States*» (Claessen, 1981 : 60; voir aussi 1991 : 308-328). Les caractéristiques communes qui nous intéressent ici sont les suivantes : 1) Le souverain (le roi) fonde sa position sur des récits traditionnels (*Mythical charter*) et une généalogie qui le relie aux forces surnaturelles (*cf.* Claessen, 1991 : 320-321); 2) L'aristocratie comprend les membres de la famille du souverain, les chefs des clans ou de lignages, etc.; 3) L'idéologie des *Early States* est fondée sur une réciprocité fictive, selon laquelle les sujets fournissent le souverain en biens et services, tandis que le souverain est responsable de la protection de ses sujets, de la loi et de l'ordre. Le rôle du clergé consiste notamment à conforter l'idéologie de l'État. 4) L'inégalité sociale au sein des *Early States* semble d'abord fonction de la naissance, c'est-à-dire de la distance relative de l'individu d'avec la lignée royale. 5) Au sein des *Early States* œuvrent de nombreux fonctionnaires qui occupent des fonctions dans l'appareil de gouvernement.

Nous verrons que les caractéristiques qui définissent selon Max Weber les dominations traditionnelles et/ou charismatiques, et celles qui constituent les critères distinctifs des *Early States*, selon l'«École de Leyde» se retrouvent *mutatis mutandis* dans le royaume des lions. Naturellement la structure narrative d'une telle histoire destinée avant tout à un public d'enfants a contraint les scénaristes à réduire ces caractères à une épure. Ils n'en transparaissent que mieux.

Référents mythiques et symboliques

Tout d'abord un mot du scénario lui-même. Afin de cerner les sources d'inspiration des scénaristes, on a maintes fois évoqué l'histoire de Hamlet[5]. Certes les scénaristes, comme ceux qui prêtent leur voix aux personnages du film, semblent imprégnés de l'œuvre shakespearienne; mais cette histoire où un prince royal voit son père assassiné et son héritage capté par un usurpateur, en l'occurrence son oncle, correspond bien plus à l'un des plus anciens récits fondateurs d'une royauté. C'est bien sûr la légende égyptienne qui met en scène Isis et Osiris, ainsi que le frère de ce dernier, Seth, et son fils, Horus. Le roi Osiris a été tué par son frère Seth. Son fils Horus s'enfuit pour échapper à son oncle et trouve refuge dans les marais du delta. Il s'y cache et y grandit, protégé par la déesse Hathor. Puis, avec l'aide de sa mère, Isis, il recouvre son trône légitime et tue son oncle. Il s'agit du récit fondamental sur lequel repose

toute l'idéologie pharaonique, ce qui nous plonge d'emblée dans la plus haute Antiquité. Le scénario du film suit point par point ce schéma narratif : Muphasa est tué par son frère, lequel veut encore tuer Simba, le fils du roi et héritier légitime du trône; celui-ci s'enfuit pour échapper à son oncle, et trouve refuge dans les confins sauvages du royaume. Il s'y cache et atteint là l'âge adulte. Il revient ensuite conquérir son royaume et tuer l'usurpateur.

Pourquoi, d'autre part, avoir situé l'histoire dans le règne animal et plus particulièrement dans le royaume des lions ? Évidemment, pour le public francophone, depuis Jean de la Fontaine au moins, la relation symbolique entre l'image du lion et la royauté paraît aller de soi. Cependant, dans l'imaginaire occidental, l'animal royal par excellence fut d'abord l'ours. Le lion ne l'a supplanté que vers le XIIe siècle seulement. Plus tard, à la fin XVIIIe siècle, il sera lui-même concurrencé par l'aigle[6]. Il s'agit donc d'un choix historiquement marqué et qui n'a rien de «naturel». On verra qu'il a offert bien des possibilités aux scénaristes tout en leur imposant des contraintes.

Légitimation du pouvoir au royaume des lions

Rôle de la tradition

Sauf à employer la seule et pure coercition, la force brutale, laquelle ne peut avoir d'effets pérennes, le pouvoir dans les *Early States* doit s'exercer avec l'adhésion, au moins implicite, de la population des dominés (étonnant assentiment sur lequel La Boétie déjà s'interrogeait dans son *Discours de la servitude volontaire ou Contr'un*). C'est le processus de légitimation par le biais de l'idéologie qui va remplir cette fonction. Processus essentiel donc car, «L'État primitif est un amalgame d'opposition structurelles» entre des pouvoirs locaux, des solidarités locales qui préexistaient à l'État et celui-ci (Kurtz, 1981 : 180-182). «D'une part, il y a l'État, ses fonctionnaires, son appareil bureaucratique, son autorité centrale et ses structures économiques, religieuses, militaires, juridiques, embryonnaires». De l'autre côté il y a «une population subordonnée qui est impliquée dans des structures traditionnelles et adhère à des valeurs traditionnelles» (Kurtz, 1981 : 181; voir aussi Claessen, 1991 : 320).

À plusieurs reprises dans le film, on insiste sur le fait que le pouvoir s'inscrit dans une continuité, dans une tradition : ce sont les ancêtres de Muphasa et de Simba qui, du haut du ciel, veillent sur le royaume et sur le roi : «Regarde les étoiles, les grands rois du passé nous contemplent du haut de ces étoiles»[7]; «Rappelle-toi que ces rois seront toujours là pour te guider. Et je ferai de même»[8] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 26-27; *Roi Lion* 2 : 25). Ainsi c'est le spectre de Muphasa lui-même, dont la forme apparaît dans les constellations, qui décidera Simba à reprendre son pouvoir légitime (*Roi Lion* 1 : 62-63; *Roi Lion* 2 : 80-81). C'est aussi la tradition que Zazu invoque explicitement pour prédire le mariage de Simba et de Nala qui sont alors encore des lionceaux : «Vous deux, les tourtereaux, vous n'avez pas le choix. C'est une tradition qui remonte à des générations»[9] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 16-17). C'est cette tradition qui justifie le pouvoir. En vertu de cette tradition, l'héritier légitime a aussi des devoirs. Lorsqu'elle tente de convaincre Simba de revenir sur la Terre des lions, Nala lui rappelle ces devoirs : «(Nala) Nous avons vraiment eu besoin de toi! (Simba) Personne n'a besoin de moi! (Nala) Bien sûr que si! Tu es le roi!»[10]. Nala affirme à Simba qu'en tant que légitime héritier du trône, c'est son devoir de rentrer (*Nala: Because it's your responsibility!*). Ceci correspond exactement à la définition que donne Max Weber des dominations traditionnelles, mâtinées de charisme (voir *supra*). Claessen (1978 : 555-557) insiste aussi sur le fait que des récits traditionnels (*Mythical charter*)[11], véhiculés par divers vecteurs, donnent à la dynastie sa légitimité inscrite dans le temps; ces récits expliquent au peuple pourquoi et en vertu de quelles traditions le roi est le roi, et ils décrivent les relations qui doivent exister entre le souverain et son peuple. Elles sont présentées comme immémoriales, c'est-à-dire inscrites en dehors de l'histoire, dans un temps mythique (Claessen, 1991 : 320-321). Ils prennent souvent la forme de généalogies et de récits fondateurs (chez les Shilluk : Evans-Pritchard, 1948 : 18 et Evans-Pritchard et Fortes, 1940 : 175; *cf.* de De Heusch, 1962 : 35ss.). C'est ce qu'indiquent clairement certains dialogues entre lions : «(Muphasa) tu as oublié qui tu es ...; regarde en toi-même. Tu es plus que ce que tu es devenu. Tu dois prendre ta place dans le cercle de la vie. Rappelle-toi qui tu es. Tu es mon fils, et *le seul vrai roi* (mes italiques)»[12]. Par la suite, Rafiki annonce à Nala, Timon et Pumbaa qui cherchent Simba : «le roi est rentré»[13]. Un seul vrai roi donc; et la légitimité du pouvoir ne réside que là où se trouve le vrai roi.

«Tout est fini, rien ne subsiste, il faut quitter le Rocher du Lion», gémit Sarabi sous le joug de Scar[14]; cela signifie que la légitimité a abandonné la Terre des Lions et même le Rocher du Lion assimilé au sanctuaire dynastique (voir infra). Rome n'est plus dans Rome! La légitimité a disparu. Cette puissance magique du roi apparaît en filigrane chez différents peuples de l'Antiquité. Pierre Carlier (1984 : 296) affirme qu' «À Sparte, la puissance

magique des rois, qui assure le salut de la cité, est héréditaire» (ce qui explique la «chasse aux bâtards»). La règle de succession elle-même, qui donne priorité au plus proche descendant d'un roi, vise à transmettre la royauté à celui qui dès sa naissance *a reçu la plus grande part du charisme royal* (mes italiques)». C'est ce qui explique qu'en Perse, par exemple, Darius Ier tient absolument à se faire passer pour descendant des premiers Achéménides et essaie longuement de démontrer que Bardiya est un imposteur, un usurpateur.[15]

Seul le vrai roi peut régner dans la paix et la prospérité. Ainsi le chant final déclare-t-il :

> *Busa le lizwe [Rule this land]*
> *Busa le lizwe [Rule this land]*
> *Busa le lizwe [Rule this land]*
> *Bus-busa ngo xolo [Rule, rule with peace]*
> *Ubuse ngo xolo [You must rule with peace]*
> *Ubuse ngo thando [You must rule with love]*
> *Ubuse ngo xolo [You must rule with peace]*
> *Ubuse ngo thando [You must rule with love]*

Après son retour et son coup de force contre son oncle, Simba assurera cette continuité à la fin de l'histoire en engendrant un fils (*Roi Lion* 1 : 80). Remarquons en passant qu'il est question de fils. Chez les lions d'Afrique, la crinière est par nature réservée aux seuls mâles; parce qu'elle est manifestement considérée par analogie avec la couronne comme un symbole royal, seuls les lions peuvent devenir roi.

Ainsi la royauté des États archaïques ou relevant de la domination traditionnelle est avant tout une royauté sacrée. C'est ce qu'exprime Evans-Pritchard : «*In my view kingship everywhere and at all times has been in some degree a sacred office. Rex est mixta persona cum sacerdote*» (Evans-Pritchard, 1948 : 36); et Claessen lui-même : «*The basic characteristic of the sovereign is his sacral status*» (1978 : 557; voir aussi De Heusch, 1962).

Rôle de la religion

On observe donc dans ces États une association très étroite du trône et de l'autel. C'est en effet une caractéristique de ces royaumes primitifs (et parfois d'autres) de rechercher leur légitimité dans la caution que leur apporte le pouvoir spirituel. Le clergé des *Early States* soutient toujours idéologiquement la royauté (Claessen, 1978 : 570-571; 1981 : 60; et Kurtz, 1981 : 186). Exceptionnellement, le roi y est un dieu, comme en Egypte, mais c'est un cas extrême (De Heusch, 1962 : 40-44; cf. Pirenne et Derchain, dans le même volume). Il peut être parfois grand prêtre de la divinité tutélaire (voir déjà Bloch, 1924 : 6), comme c'est le cas à Sidon en Phénicie (Elayi, 1989 : 110-113), à Paphos (Maier, 1989) et à Amathonte (Petit, 1996; 2002; sous presse [a]) dans l'île de Chypre, aux époques archaïque et classique, comme aussi chez les Shilluks du Soudan au XXe siècle (Evans-Pritchard, 1948 : 16). Mais, dans les exemples étudiés chez Claessen et Skalnik (1978), le roi ou un proche parent n'est grand prêtre que dans huit cas sur dix-sept, soit moins de la moitié des occurrences. Dans deux tiers des cas, cependant, il accomplit lui-même des rites, mais c'est un autre qui est grand prêtre (voir, par exemple, Petit, 2002). Les scénaristes des studios Walt Disney ont donc respecté la majorité statistique, puisque ici c'est le second type de prêtrise qui est illustré, celle exercée par une autre classe; en l'occurrence, chez les animaux, par une autre espèce : Rafiki est un Babouin ou un Mandrill (voir, par exemple, *Roi Lion* 2 : 53). (Remarquons qu'il s'agit d'une espèce proche de l'homme.) Dans ce cas, la caste sacerdotale défend farouchement ses prérogatives. Ainsi, las d'attendre la venue de Samuel, Saül accomplit indûment l'holocauste en lieu et place du Prophète; celui-ci le tance vertement pour cela et lui prédit dès lors la fin de sa lignée (*1 Samuel*, 13, 7-14). Le cas ne se présente pas dans le film; mais gageons que, dans une telle circonstance, Rafiki aurait eu, face à Muphasa, une réaction semblable à celle de Samuel à l'égard de Saül. Au sein des *Early States*, le clergé est toujours en étroite relation avec le roi (Claessen, 1978 : 571); dans le royaume des lions, le grand prêtre peut même apparaître comme l'égal du roi, puisque Rafiki embrasse Muphasa au début du film, alors que le fidèle Zazu lui-même (cf. infra), comme l'ensemble des animaux, se prosterne devant le roi[16]. Cependant une autre scène, à la fin du film, rectifie cette image : lorsque Simba devient roi, Rafiki d'abord se courbe, puis Simba l'attire à lui pour «l'étreindre comme le faisait son père»[17]. La scène est symbolique : c'est par la volonté expresse du roi que le grand prêtre est son égal.

Dans la majorité des cas, une formation particulière est nécessaire au sacerdoce; dans les *Early States*, en effet, les prêtres sont considérés comme des spécialistes. Ici Rafiki semble effectivement détenir un savoir spécifique. Il est précisé dans le casting que Rafiki est «un mandrill dont le rôle est celui d'un chaman mystique. À première vue, il semble fou, mais en réalité il est très sage»[18]. À différents moments du film, il semble représenter et peut-être induire magiquement les événements par des dessins cabalistiques qu'il trace sur le mur de sa maison : un lionceau avec l'onction et une «couronne de cérémonie», qu'il effacera quand il apprendra la nouvelle de la mort de Simba; puis, plus tard, après avoir retrouvé Simba, il redessinera la figure en lui ajoutant une crinière[19]. C'est aussi par des pratiques

relevant de la divination qu'il apprend que Simba est toujours en vie[20]. Ses apparitions tiennent souvent de la magie[21]. On ne sait évidemment pas d'où lui viennent ces connaissances, mais on imagine aisément un prédécesseur qui l'aurait initié à son savoir. Il est cependant le seul singe représenté dans le film. À lui seul, Rafiki est non seulement le grand prêtre du royaume, mais, du fait même de la nature d'une telle histoire, réduite par convention de genre à une épure, il est le seul représentant de ce pouvoir religieux. Il subsume à lui seul l'ensemble de la caste cléricale du royaume.

Il semble aussi détenir des pouvoirs d'initiateur : le trajet que Rafiki fait suivre à Simba pour le mener à la mare où il aura la révélation de son père ressemble à un parcours initiatique et symbolique, tel qu'il peut être décrit par les textes ethnographiques ou maçonniques. L'impétrant marche courbé dans un couloir sombre et étroit, ce qui préfigure sa nouvelle naissance (voir, par exemple, *Roi Lion* 2 : 78-79).

Rafiki est aussi pourvu des attributs symboliques de sa charge; en particulier, le bâton recourbé qui ressemble à celui des sorciers indiens dans les westerns, et qui est au babouin ce que la crosse est à l'évêque (*Roi Lion* 1 : 64; *Roi Lion* 2 : 53). Rafiki ne veut pas à aucun prix se séparer de cette houlette : elle semble revêtir beaucoup d'importance pour lui; peut-être même ses pouvoirs seraient-ils compromis s'il en était privé. Quand Simba, excédé de recevoir des coups de ce bâton sur le crâne, veut le lui enlever, Rafiki s'écrie : «Non, non, non, non, pas le bâton!»[22].

Le grand prêtre garantit la légitimation religieuse à la royauté. Celle-ci est essentielle pour assurer au pouvoir l'adhésion des dominés (voir par exemple, Weber, 1972 : 122-124, 549-550). Quand Simba a réussi son coup d'État contre Scar et les hyènes, «Rafiki, dit le script, fait signe à Simba de gravir le Rocher des Lions, en tant que roi»[23]. C'est lui aussi qui accomplit les rites de légitimation du successeur dynastique : il oint le nouveau-né avec le jus de la calebasse et du sable[24]. Les exemples sont nombreux à travers l'histoire de pareilles onctions royales. Le prophète Samuel oint Saül comme roi («Samuel prit la fiole d'huile et la versa sur la tête de [Saül]; il l'embrassa et dit : "N'est-ce pas Yahvé qui t'a oint comme chef sur son peuple, sur Israël ?"» : *1 Samuel*, 10, 1); et il fera de même avec David. C'est le prophète Élie qui oint Jéhu roi sur Israël (*1 Rois* 19, 15-16). Le rite de l'onction royale sera repris par la royauté carolingienne, puis par les dynasties de l'Occident chrétien, en particulier dans le royaume de France. Il s'agit d'un privilège conféré par la coutume à l'archevêque de Reims. Le rite essentiel est précisément «l'onction d'huile sainte dont l'archevêque

oint le roi sur le front : le roi est l'oint du Seigneur» (Lemarignier, 1970 : 150-153, spéc. 151).

Rafiki présente aussi officiellement le futur roi au peuple (*Roi Lion* 2 : 4-5; *Roi Lion* 2 : 6-7; 96). Le terme «présentation» apparaît d'ailleurs trois fois dans le script[25]. Le peuple des animaux est convoqué à cette fin pour reconnaissance et allégeance, et ils s'inclinent devant le prince (*The crowd bows down*). On trouve des institutions similaires en Perse achéménide (Petit, 1990 : 169-170) et dans L'Ancien Testament[26], comme dans les travaux ethnographiques (Claessen, 1991 : 316, 320-321).

On voit que Rafiki est le garant de la régularité de la succession et des qualités du roi. C'est lui qui va rechercher le roi légitime dans la forêt. Lorsque Scar prend le pouvoir, Rafiki hoche la tête de dépit[27] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 42-43); et il ne se tient plus de joie lorsqu'il découvre, plus tard, que Simba est en vie[28]. Au-delà de la caution du grand prêtre, par-delà sa personne, en même temps que grâce à lui, on devine l'approbation de la divinité elle-même : en effet, au moment où Rafiki présente au peuple le lionceau, héritier du trône, un rayon de soleil illumine la scène d'un éclat particulier[29] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 4-5). Il en ira de même, à la fin du film, lors de la seconde présentation, celle de Chaka[30] (*Roi Lion* 2 : 96). Un égyptologue pourrait à coup sûr évoquer l'analogie de ces rayons avec ceux, terminés par des mains bienfaitrices, qu'Aton darde vers le pharaon et sa famille, sur de nombreuses stèles amarniennes (voir, par exemple, Schultz et Seidel, s.d. : 201, fig. 101).

Représentations de la royauté sacrée par elle-même

Les cérémonies

Dans la plupart des États primitifs – et contemporains - la royauté se représente, se donne en spectacle, dans certaines circonstances privilégiées, en particulier lors de cérémonies officielles. Soit elles jalonnent la carrière royale : cela va de la présentation au peuple de l'héritier du trône, aux obsèques du roi mort, en passant par l'intronisation du nouveau roi, son mariage, etc. (voir, entre autres, Cannadine, 1987; Claessen, 1978 : 556-557). Ou encore elles rythment l'année officielle, comme lors de la cérémonie babylonienne de l'*akitu* qui assure le renouvellement annuel des forces du royaume (voir, par exemple, Kuhrt, 1987; Pongratz-Leisten, 1999 : 295-296 : "*Die Intention des Rituals ist die Begründung und Re-etablierung der bestehenden Ordnung....Wichtige zweite Komponente ist die Legitimation des Königtums, herbeigeführt durch den Ritus des „neg. Sündenbekenntnisses", der die Sakralisierung des Königs neu bewirkt...*").

Le film commence par la présentation officielle du roi au peuple. Le peuple y est *convoqué* par le rugissement du roi[31]. C'est une façon, comme le nouveau suzerain médiéval l'exigeait des vassaux de son père, de renouveler préventivement l'allégeance des sujets (*The crowd bows down*) et d'assurer la transition dynastique (voir, par exemple, Petit, sous presse [b]). L'absence de Scar à la cérémonie est d'autant plus lourde de sens[32]. Comme on l'a vu, c'est bien sûr Rafiki qui accomplit le rite. Claessen (1978 : 556) montre bien que, dans l'écrasante majorité des cas, le statut sacré du roi ne s'obtient que par une inauguration rituelle et qu'il n'est qu'exceptionnellement attribué avant l'onction (cf. Claessen, 1991 : 316). La présentation est le seul rite représenté dans le film; mais on peut supposer que les obsèques de Muphasa ont été également menées en grande pompe par Scar, pour conforter la fiction de la continuité du pouvoir (pour Sparte, voir Carlier, 1984 : 297; cf. Claessen, 1991 : 320-321).

La plastique et l'architecture

De manière plus pérenne, la royauté donne et diffuse d'elle-même des représentations plastiques, dans la sculpture, la peinture (voir Marcus, 1974), mais peut-être surtout dans l'architecture monumentale (Petit, 2001 : 59-63; Price, 1978 : 165; Trigger, 1974 : 101; Whitelam, 1986). Les représentations permanentes de la royauté sous forme d'édifices monumentaux ou d'œuvres plastiques sont un moyen couramment utilisé sinon pour asseoir, du moins pour affirmer, la légitimité; et, dans des États où la majorité des sujets ne dominent pas l'écrit – maîtrise qui est précisément l'apanage du pouvoir et contribue à le légitimer (voir, par exemple, Finkelstein, 1999 : 39; Larsen, 1988; Lévi-Strauss, 1955 : 173-174; Petit, 2001 : 61; Skalnik, 1978 : 607) – elles permettent de diffuser sous forme visuelle la représentation idéale de la royauté dans son rôle politique, social et sacré, et ses mythes fondateurs (cf. Petit, sous presse [a]). La production de cet art figuré de luxe, que d'aucuns ont nommé la «Grande Tradition» (Cherry, 1978 : 422-423; Trigger, 1974 : 101; Yoffee, 1993 : 66-67; cf. déjà Weber, 1972 : 651), était souvent l'apanage des dominants et le plus souvent était mise à leur service exclusif. Lorsqu'émerge une royauté nouvelle, le premier soin de la nouvelle dynastie est de fonder un grand temple/sanctuaire pour la divinité tutélaire, et un palais. Après la prise de Jérusalem aux Jébuséens, dont il choisit de faire le siège de sa dynastie, David fait d'abord édifier le palais, puis projette la construction du temple; mais c'est son fils, Salomon, qui le réalisera de manière grandiose (voir références dans Petit, 2001 : 64-65). L'apparition

d'une architecture monumentale (palais, mausolée, muraille urbaine, temple de la divinité poliade, etc.) est même l'un des critères archéologiques majeurs d'une société stratifiée (Petit, 2001 : spéc. 55-60; Price, 1978 : 165; Trigger, 1974 : 101; Van Bakel, 1996 : 323-326; Whitelam, 1986).

Évidemment, s'agissant d'animaux, l'introduction dans le film de bâtiments construits serait étrange, même auprès d'un public d'enfants. Mais, le Rocher du Lion (*Pride Rock*), fait office de lieu symbolique du pouvoir. Il semble d'ailleurs presque construit, même si c'est par un étrange accident naturel (*Roi Lion* 1 : 67). Le Rocher du Lion semble bien ici remplir les deux fonctions : celle de palais, en tant que résidence de la famille royale, et celle de sanctuaire officiel en tant qu'édifice cérémoniel (pour le sanctuaire dynastique, voir Cherry, 1978 : 425-426; Claessen, 1996 : 352; Gunawardana, 1981 : 140-141; Trigger, 1974 : 96, 100-101; Van Bakel, 1996 : 323-325; Yoffee, 1993 : 69-70). La construction d'un tel sanctuaire est destinée à marquer visuellement et symboliquement l'espace sacré, rituellement délimité, autant qu'à baliser le paysage (Knapp, 1996; Petit, 2001 : 59). C'est de toute évidence le cas pour le Rocher du Lion (*Pride Rock*), qui marque ostensiblement le territoire et paraît en constituer le centre (voir, entre autres, *Roi Lion* 1 : 67; *Roi Lion* 2 : 6-7). Il est le lieu central et symbolique du pouvoir et de sa légitimation par la sacralité.

Le roi comme protecteur/défenseur du royaume

Le roi est le protecteur de son royaume contre toutes les forces hostiles : humaines, naturelles et métaphysiques. Lui seul est capable de maintenir dans un état d'équilibre la prospérité de l'État en permanence menacée (Abélès, 1981; Muller, 1981). C'est ce qu'exprime clairement Muphasa lorsqu'il déclare à Simba en lui montrant son futur royaume : «Tout ce que tu vois existe ensemble dans un équilibre délicat. En tant que roi, tu dois comprendre cet équilibre et respecter toutes les créatures, depuis la fourmi qui rampe jusqu'à l'antilope bondissante»[33] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 8-9).

Le roi protège le royaume contre les forces humaines (ici animales)

Le roi est protecteur de son peuple contre les agressions (Weber, 1972 : 676 : *Der König ist überall primär ein Kriegsfürst. Das Königtum wächst aus charismatischen Heldentum heraus*). Dans les royaumes primitifs, il est presque toujours chef de guerre. Selon Claessen (1978 : 562), le souverain est intimement associé à l'appareil militaire. C'est le cas dans l'ancien Israël (C'est

même pour faire face à la menace militaire des Philistins que les Hébreux se choisissent un roi, qui est donc avant tout chef de guerre : voir, par exemple, *1 Samuel*, 9, 16; 10, 1; 9, 17-27; 10, 1; 10, 24-25; 11, 14-15) et dans d'autres États archaïques (Claessen, 1978 : 562-563, 612; Dalton, 1981 : 31; Lewis, 1981 : 212). La guerre est évidemment la circonstance privilégiée où le roi peut montrer ses capacités militaires (Gunawardana, 1981 : 136-140; Petit 2001 : 61; Trigger, 1974 : 99 et 101). Certes aucune guerre contre un autre royaume n'est représentée dans le film : l'épisode n'aurait à coup sûr rien apporté à l'intrigue. Mais, lorsque se présente une menace d'invasion venant de l'extérieur, de l'étranger, il ne fait aucun doute que c'est à Muphasa d'intervenir. Ainsi, lorsque Zazu, sur le rapport de la marmotte, annonce à Muphasa : «Sire! Des hyènes! Sur la Terre des Lions!»[34], Muphasa se précipite. Il est le mieux placé pour ce faire, car il possède la puissance : Muphasa affirme à son fils que personne ne peut se mesurer à lui quant à la force physique[35]. En revanche, Scar admet lui-même qu'au regard de la génétique, il n'a pas été favorisé par la nature[36].

Le roi protège le royaume contre les forces naturelles

Au moins depuis Marc Bloch (1924; voir aussi Edsman, 1959), on sait que le roi, même dans des États de l'Europe médiévale, passait pour détenir des pouvoirs magiques (les rois de France guérissant les écrouelles). Ainsi Claessen relève (1978 : 558) que, dans quatorze cas sur vingt et un, le roi paraît être un médiateur entre les forces surnaturelles et le royaume (pour Chypre dans l'Antiquité, voir Petit, 1996 : 109-111).

La prospérité du royaume et de sa population est garantie par les pouvoirs thaumaturgiques du roi. Le roi est censé assurer la fertilité de son territoire et la fécondité des hommes et des troupeaux qui y vivent (Abélès, 1981 : 5; Claessen, 1981 : 63; Park, 1966 : 216, 232-233). C'est là une idée déjà mise en lumière par James Frazer dans son *Golden Bough* (1911). Si le grain manque, si le désastre survient, il faut changer de roi. Frazer établissait une étroite identification entre le roi et son royaume (Muller, 1981 : 239). En ce sens d'ailleurs, il peut jouer le rôle de bouc émissaire (selon les théories de René Girard : cf. Muller, 1981 : 245-246). «Le roi apparaît comme le garant de l'ordre naturel, le seul qui puisse restaurer le monde après une catastrophe, et celui dont la faiblesse est suffisante pour provoquer la tragédie» (Abélès, 1981 : 2). «Les anthropologues...décrivent [les rois] comme les garants de la fécondité des troupeaux et des humains, et comme les maîtres des rites de ferti-

lité». À tel point que les sujets des rois Rukuba «estiment son travail sur la base de la taille de la récolte» (Abélès, 1981 : 5).

À une ère d'apparente prospérité, sous le règne légitime de Muphasa, vont succéder des temps de pauvreté, de sécheresse et de désolation, sous le règne néfaste de Scar. Le script insiste sur l'atmosphère de désolation[37] : il est question de décor gris[38], d'absence de vie, qu'elle soit animale ou végétale[39], d'absence d'eau et de nourriture[40] (voir *Roi Lion* 1 : 66-67; *Roi Lion* 2 : 82-83). Quand le roi légitime est chassé, les forces de la nature se rebellent[41]. C'est parce que le roi n'a pas la noblesse, et surtout la sacralité attachée à la naissance légitime que les forces naturelles renâclent. Ainsi Sarabi, faisant remarquer le départ des troupeaux, reproche à Scar de ne pas valoir la moitié de Muphasa[42]. De même Nala avertit Simba : «Tout est détruit. Il n'y a plus rien à manger, plus d'eau. Si tu ne fais pas quelque chose, Simba, tous mourront de faim»[43]. Dès que Simba rétablit la légitimité du pouvoir, tout redevient prospère, la pluie se met à tomber (*Roi Lion* 1 : 78-79; *Roi Lion* 2 : 94-95) et la nature refleurit[44]. Le parallèle des royautés sacrées africaines est clair à cet égard. Le roi est celui qui garantit la fertilité des champs et la fécondité des troupeaux; c'est souvent d'ailleurs un faiseur de pluie (cf. Evans-Pritchard et Fortes, 1940 : 18 ss.). En Afrique, tous les rois «accomplissent des rites pour favoriser la fertilité du pays et des gens» (Claessen, 1981 : 63-64[45]). Il en va peut-être de même en Grèce ancienne : ainsi, selon P. Carlier (1984 : 293), «Le roi [Pleistoanax de Sparte] a probablement été restauré parce qu'il apparaissait comme le garant de l'abondance des moissons. L'oracle [de Delphes] a redonné vie à la vieille conception magique du roi "faiseur de pluie"».

Le roi protège le royaume contre les forces métaphysiques

Dans les États primitifs, le roi est aussi garant de l'ordre cosmique et doit empêcher le Mal de s'installer sur son territoire. Là encore les exemples sont nombreux dans les États antiques. Ainsi l'idéologie deutéronomiste est entièrement fondée sur l'idée que les rois doivent obéir à Yahvé et rejeter les faux dieux. Ceux qui ignorent cette prescription causent leur propre perte et celle du peuple (Finkelstein et Silberman, 2002 : passim, spéc. 192-205, 225-232, 288-301, etc.). Mais rarement une telle idée a été proclamée avec autant de force que par Darius Ier, qui, dans ses inscriptions officielles, se présente comme le rempart unique contre le déferlement du *Drauga* (voir, entre autres, Lecoq, 199 : 163-164).

Les forces commandées par Scar, les hyènes, représentent clairement les forces du Mal. Symbolique à cet égard est la scène du défilé des hyènes devant Scar, leurs troupes parfaitement alignées, que le script compare explicitement aux défilés de Nürnberg[46] (*Roi Lion 2 : 28-29); elles avancent dans les ténèbres, dans une atmosphère infernale (geysers et solfatares en éruptions, vapeurs que l'on devine soufrées, etc.)[47]. Alors que la royauté de Muphasa et de Simba est placée sous le signe du soleil (voir supra, p. 6), la régence de Scar est tout entière placée sous les auspices lunaires (*Roi Lion 1 : 42-43; Roi Lion 2 : 50-51*).

Réalité du pouvoir au royaume des lions

Hiérarchisation sociale au royaume des lions

Contrairement aux communautés tribales où règne l'égalité sociale, du moins de statut, les États primitifs présentent une société hiérarchisée. La population est divisée au moins en deux couches, ou strates sociales (Claessen, 1978 : 545-554 et 567). Souvent autour du roi gravite une classe dominante, l'aristocratie, la noblesse, etc. : les *dominants*, qui gouverne une strate inférieure : les *dominés* (Weber, 1972 : 130, 133; 1922, 3 : *die Untertanen, die Beherrschten*). Et les ressources de base sont inégalement réparties entre les différentes strates. Les aristocrates ont un accès plus aisé à ces ressources, comme d'ailleurs à d'autres plus spécifiques (Claessen, 1978 : 553-554). Peu nous importe, en l'occurrence, que la diversité des relations économiques soit grande entre les États primitifs que l'on peut considérer.

La strate dominante peut, elle-même, être subdivisée. On trouve toujours partout : le souverain et son clan; une aristocratie (princes, notables); une *gentry*, c'est-à-dire une sorte de basse aristocratie de tenanciers. Dans la structure sociale simplifiée qui prévaut au royaume des lions, ceux-ci forment presque exclusivement l'aristocratie et le reste des animaux constitue la classe des dominés. On peut toutefois compter comme appartenant à cette strate de dominants les prêtres, subsumés dans le personnage de Rafiki. Les *ministeriales*, représentés par Zazu, appartiennent à la strate intermédiaire. Claessen appelle ces catégories *The Administrative Apparatus* (Claessen, 1978 : 575) ou *De ambtelijke inslag* (Claessen, 1991 : 324-326), et Max Weber le *Verwaltungsstab* (Weber, 1972 : 130-137; 1922 : 4-6).

Le clergé

On a vu ce qu'il fallait penser de la position de Rafiki par rapport à Muphasa (voir supra). Je n'y reviens pas,

sinon pour rappeler que les savants incluent le haut clergé dans la strate des dominants (Claessen, 1978 : 548 et 571).

Les *ministeriales*

Dans les États primitifs, on assiste à l'émergence d'une administration embryonnaire, d'une certaine division du travail de gouvernement. À côté des aristocrates, qui occupent des postes en vue sur la seule base de leur parenté avec le roi (Claessen, 1978 : 546-548, 568-570; Weber, 1972 : 131), on voit apparaître, en plus des prêtres, une autre sorte de spécialistes dont la fonction nécessite des connaissances particulières, parmi eux notamment des administrateurs et des scribes[48]. Les exemples sont nombreux chez Max Weber (voir, par exemple, 1972 : 131-133, 580-623 [spéc. 594-598]). Dans le royaume d'Israël, David instaure des offices : «Joab, fils de Seronya, commandait l'armée, Yehochaphat, fils d'Ahiloud, était archiviste, Sadoq, fils d'Ahimelek, et Ebyatar, fils d'Ahitoub, étaient prêtres, Seraya était secrétaire» (*2 Samuel*, 8, 16-17).

Dans le film, Zazu est avec Rafiki le seul spécialiste à plein temps, si l'on excepte une «marmotte»[49], membre des services de renseignements (*cf* Claessen et Skalnik 1978, 584 : *The Surveillance Apparatus*), ce qui rappelle «les yeux et les oreilles du roi» en Perse achéménide (Briant, 1996 : 36, 271, 355, 646; Petit, 1990 : 170-172). Ici la catégorie des *ministeriales* est donc presque entièrement constituée du seul Zazu.

Selon Claessen (1978 : 546-549), les *ministériales* appartiennent à la classe intermédiaire. C'est bien ce qui transparaît dans le film. Alors que tout au début de l'histoire, Rafiki embrasse Muphasa, Zazu se prosterne devant le roi; Muphasa lui sourit cependant et lui fait un signe de connivence[50]. Cette attitude amicale autant que condescendante indique que l'amitié qu'il voue à Zazu est purement circonstancielle et dépend à tout moment de son bon vouloir. Tandis que les prêtres sont donc considérés comme les égaux de l'aristocratie (Claessen, 1978 : 548 et 571) et le grand prêtre comme le quasi égal du roi (avec une nuance expliquée ci-dessus), parce qu'il légitime son pouvoir, les *ministeriales* sont au service du prince et leur «carrière» dépend, non de leur seule compétence, comme dans les États «bureaucratiques» modernes, mais de la faveur ou de la défaveur du seigneur (voir Weber, 1972 : 130-132, 598 et 638; 1922 : 3-5)[51]. Les attitudes respectives de Rafiki et de Zazu après le coup d'État de Scar illustrent clairement le rapport de chacun à la royauté : alors que Rafiki semble s'être retiré «sous sa tente» et refuse manifestement de cautionner l'usurpateur, Zazu est contraint *nolens volens* de servir

le nouveau pouvoir. Quoiqu'il ait naguère fait mine en plaisantant de partir si Simba régnait selon son caprice (*out of Africa!*)[52], en réalité il n'a guère le choix. C'est bien contre son gré qu'il passe au service de Scar. Zazu se dit *majordome* du roi[53] et *The King's loyal servant.* Mais il occupe d'autres fonctions : il est le *porte-parole,* le messager du roi, par exemple auprès de Scar; il apparaît aussi comme le *secrétaire* du roi : il s'occupe de *l'administration* du royaume[54]; il fait rapport au roi tous les matins sur l'état du royaume[55].

Souvent, dans les États primitifs, les *ministeriales* ne sont pas issus de l'aristocratie, dont les connaissances se limitent souvent à l'art de la guerre (Weber, 1972 : 650-651); ils appartiennent à un autre Ordre (*Stand*), chez les animaux, à une autre race : Zazu est un calao (Weber, 1972 : 594; Weber, 1922 : 4 : «*Die Diener sind … entweder rein patrimonial rekrutiert: Sklaven, Hörige, Eunuchen – oder extrapatrimonial aus gänzlich rechtlosen Schichten: Günstlinge, Plebejer*»; et 1922 : 5 : «*Die typische "Beamten" des Patrimonials und Feudalstaates sind Hausbeamte mit zunächst rein dem Haushalt angehörigen Aufgaben [Truchseß, Kämmerer, Marschall, Schenke, Seneschal, Hausmeier]*»). Vu l'extrême simplification de la hiérarchisation sociale dans l'État léonin, il serait assez vain de vouloir raffiner l'analyse en tentant de la définir comme domination traditionnelle «patriarchale», «patrimoniale» ou «d'Ordres» (*ständisch*), distinction chère à Max Weber (voir, en particulier, Weber, 1922). Au plus, du fait même de sa simplification, semble-t-il s'apparenter à la forme la plus pure, c'est-à-dire à la domination traditionnelle patriarchale (Weber, 1922 : 3 : *Traditionelle Herrschaft…. Reinster Typus ist die patriarchalische Herrschaft*); mais à d'autres égards, elle paraît aussi présenter certains traits d'une structure d'Ordres (voir infra p. 11).

L'aristocratie léonine

Dans les États primitifs, les privilèges de l'aristocratie sont fonction de la plus ou moins grande proximité familiale avec la personne royale (Claessen, 1978 : 558; 1981, 60). Dans la totalité des exemples étudiés par Claessen (1978 : 568), la famille du roi appartient à, ou forme seule l'aristocratie. Ici ce sont bien sûr les lions, et même, pour être plus précis, les lionnes. En effet, à l'exception de Scar – car il faut bien un félon – et de Simba lui-même, aucun autre lion que le roi n'est mis en scène dans le dessin animé. D'autres lions mâles, par nature, auraient aussi porté la crinière, appendice naturel qui symbolise la couronne royale. Ils auraient donc fait concurrence aux trois protagonistes mâles du drame, qui constituent les équivalents fonctionnels d'Osiris, Horus et Seth,

dans le mythe fondateur de la royauté égyptienne, soit le trio minimal de protagonistes nécessaires à l'intrigue.

Dans les États primitifs, il y a souvent une *gentry,* c'est-à-dire des propriétaires d'une noblesse inférieure (Claessen, 1978 : 545-554; 567-575), voire d'une autre «race» ou d'un autre peuple (cf. le statut inférieur des seigneurs saxons par rapport aux Normands dans le roman de Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*). Mais ici la distinction était difficilement transposable dans le scénario, et d'ailleurs inutile à l'intrigue. On peut à la rigueur imaginer des *leaders* parmi les éléphants, les gazelles et les girafes qui se rendent au Rocher du Lion (*Roi Lion* 1 : 2-3).

On retrouve donc dans le film les trois strates de populations que l'anthropologie observe dans les *Early States.* Dans la strate supérieure : le souverain et sa famille proche (Simba et son père, la reine Sarabi, Scar), l'aristocratie (les lion[ne]s), le(s) prêtre(s) (Rafiki) et les chefs militaires (potentiellement, les lions eux-mêmes); au niveau intermédiaire : les *ministériales* (Zazu et la marmotte) et, virtuellement, la *gentry;* et, parmi les «dominés», les autres catégories (Claessen, 1978 : 545-555), c'est-à-dire ici les autres espèces animales (voir *Roi Lion* 1 : 2-3).

Avec le roi, la classe dominante est constituée des lions, qui nécessairement, en vertu de la barrière des espèces, pratiquent l'endogamie. La phrase de Zazu qui précise que la tradition oblige Simba et Nala à se marier n'a de sens que si cette obligation découle de leur commune appartenance à l'aristocratie. Le choix de situer l'histoire dans le règne animal contraint donc les scénaristes à imaginer une hiérarchie fermée, régie par une totale absence de perméabilité sociale. Dans le cas des lions, les privilèges de l'aristocratie relèvent d'une distinction biologique. Dans certains États prébureaucratiques, les «dominants» entendent également appuyer leur domination effective sur une distinction d'avec les autres Ordres présentée comme «naturelle», fondée sur le sang. On peut évoquer à titre d'exemple l'idée apparue au XVIIIe siècle que la noblesse française d'Ancien Régime descendrait des conquérants germains, les Francs, tandis que le reste de la population dépendante descendrait des Gaulois, affirmation que l'on trouve encore chez Augustin Thierry. Cette opinion selon laquelle une cloison «naturelle», raciale ou du moins spécifique, séparerait dominants et dominés est évidemment destinée à justifier les privilèges de statut et d'accès aux ressources dont jouissent les premiers.

Avec le départ du vrai roi, cet «Ordre» (*Stand*, dans le sens weberien : par exemple, Weber, 1972 : 130-131, 177-180, 625-653; 1922 : 4-6) est chassé du pouvoir qu'il exerçait «naturellement» et donc légitimement. On peut

en déduire que la légitimité du roi ne se fonde pas sur la volonté des administrés (les dominés), mais sur le sang, la tradition et l'appui de l'aristocratie «naturelle». En cela, la structure étatique du royaume des lions sous Muphasa est plus proche du *Feudalismus* et du *Ständestaat* weberiens que de son Patrimonialisme/Patriarchalisme (voir, en particulier, Weber, 1972 : 651-652[56]). Lorsque Simba reprend le pouvoir, il affirme son autorité par un rugissement auquel répondent les lionnes, en guise d'assentiment[57]. Lorsque Scar affirme pour justifier son pouvoir : «Elles [les hyènes] pensent que je suis roi», les lionnes rétorquent : «Pas nous! Simba est le roi légitime»[58]. En revanche, la structure que met en place Scar relève plus du patrimonialisme patriarchal (Weber, 1972 : 651-652)[59]. Pour réaliser son coup d'État, Scar ne pouvait compter sur le soutien de l'aristocratie légitime, des lionnes; il s'appuie donc sur les hyènes[60], qui sont étrangères au royaume. Au début du film Zazu s'écrie : «des hyènes sur la Terre des Lions!», ce qui indique qu'elles n'y sont pas chez elles. Cette caste, littéralement «charognarde», va constituer la nouvelle strate de dominants, une nouvelle classe racialement, ou mieux spécifiquement, ignoble, une classe de mercenaires (Scar les paie en viande après l'attaque contre Simba et Nala), ce qui accroît encore l'horreur de l'usurpation. Le défilé des hyènes devant Scar montre le caractère strictement militaire de ces charognards, reîtres servant le plus offrant, et n'hésitant pas à le trahir et à le tuer en cas de revirement de situation (voir la fin tragique de Scar). Bien sûr, Scar a soin de masquer son coup de force de type national-socialiste et le recours aux hyènes-mercenaires comme «sections d'assaut» par des discours vertueux, qui en évoquent d'autres, sur la nouvelle ère qui s'ouvre ainsi : «Nous nous lèverons pour saluer l'apparition d'une ère nouvelle dans laquelle le lion et la hyène marcheront ensemble dans un futur grandiose et glorieux»[61]. Aidé des hyènes, Scar établit donc une forme radicale de patrimonialisme, voire de sultanisme (Weber, 1972 : 133-134, 585, 590, 640 et 1922 : 4)[62].

Avec l'arrivée de ces nouveaux dominants, l'aristocratie légitime est dépossédée de ses droits et reléguée dans un statut dégradant pour elle. Ainsi Nala et les lionnes sont-elles obligées de travailler – c'est-à-dire de chasser, pour des lions – alors qu'au début du film, même si implicitement on sait que les lions et, plus souvent, les lionnes, doivent chasser pour vivre, elles ne font rien et vivent dans une agréable oisiveté[63] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 14-15; *Roi Lion* 2 : 14-15). Autrement dit, non seulement la terre est «gaste», désolée, mais c'est le monde à l'envers : les aristocrates doivent travailler pour nourrir les mercenaires, les hyènes. C'est bien sûr l'Ordre légitime

qui aidera Simba à réaliser son coup d'État et ainsi reviendra lui-même au pouvoir (*Roi Lion* 1 : 74-75).

Le territoire et la population

Définition du territoire dans les États archaïques

Pour qu'il y ait État, fût-il primitif, il faut que l'autorité du roi s'exerce sur un territoire défini (Claessen, 1978 : 537-538). Au début du film, Muphasa montre à son fils l'étendue de son futur royaume[64] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 8-9). Sa limite est marquée par le cimetière des éléphants. Il se trouve «au-delà de nos frontières», dit Muphasa; Scar est plus précis encore : «au-delà des hauteurs de la frontière nord»[65]. Une fois dans le cimetière en compagnie de Simba et de Nala, Zazu les met en garde : «nous avons largement dépassé les frontières de la Terre des Lions»[66]; surgissent alors les hyènes qui prennent un air menaçant en s'adressant à Simba : «Sais-tu ce que nous faisons aux rois qui quittent leur royaume?»[67] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 22-23; *Roi Lion* 2 : 20-21). Dans une autre direction – peut-être vers le sud, puisque le cimetière des éléphants, endroit enténébré, se situe, lui, au nord – le royaume est limité par un désert brûlant (voir infra).

La population dépendante

Selon Claessen, «le territoire est occupé par des peuples de différentes familles ou différents clans qui reconnaissent la présence d'une unité politique s'étendant aux frontières de l'État» (Claessen, 1978 : 527). Y correspondent dans le film les différentes espèces animales que l'on voit affluer vers le Rocher du Lion pour prêter allégeance au futur roi[68] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 2-3). Si elles sont tenues de s'y rendre, c'est qu'elles relèvent de l'autorité du roi en tant qu'elles vivent sur le territoire de l'État[69]. En effet, le pouvoir central dans les *Early States* s'oppose, par essence, aux pouvoirs exercés par les chefs locaux, la *gentry* (Kurtz, 1981 : 180). Leur obéissance effective, symbolisée par leur allégeance formelle, est donc nécessaire à la survie de l'État (Kurtz, 1981 : 182).

Ce territoire est aussi un terroir qui produit des ressources (voir De Polignac 1984). Celles-ci, nous l'avons vu, sont inégalement partagées entre les différentes strates de la société (Claessen, 1978 : 544-545, 549-554). La classe dominante prélève les surplus de la production agricole au départ du principe fictif de la réciprocité : le roi fournit protection aux sujets et au royaume contre tribut. Il va de soi que, dans les États primitifs, les moyens de subsistance sont essentiellement agricoles. Dans les *Early States*, ce tribut est donc pris sur le surplus des récoltes. En l'occurrence, cette constante était difficilement transposable dans le règne animal. Cepen-

dant on devine dans le film la perception d'un tribut; il est prélevé sur la population dépendante elle-même. Ici le roi et les lions prennent un contingent d'individus sur les troupeaux des autres espèces. Au fond, le même principe est à l'œuvre; simplement c'est d'un surplus de chasse qu'il s'agit en l'occurrence. En effet, sous le règne de Scar, les lionnes se plaignent que le territoire ne fournit plus de gibier[70]. C'est que, en corollaire, le prélèvement de ce surplus ne peut se faire qu'en respectant cet «équilibre délicat» évoqué par Muphasa devant Simba (voir supra, p. 7). De même, dans les *Early States*, la part de tribut ne doit pas excéder une certaine part de la production, sans quoi le renouvellement annuel des semences et des récoltes, ainsi que la subsistance et donc la pérennité des forces productives seraient compromis.

Géographie imaginaire des États archaïques

L'existence de ces zones-frontières (en grec : *eschatia* : Vidal-Naquet, 1991 [1981] : 156, 174) induit aussi des représentations mentales chez les populations de l'État archaïque. La géographie y est perçue comme bipolaire : les confins, les zones frontières, sont ressenties comme le contraire du territoire même, où les valeurs sont inversées, zones de sauvagerie face à la civilisation, du désordre face à l'ordre, etc. En les comparant à des conceptions semblables chez les peuples autrefois dits «sauvages», P. Vidal-Naquet, à la suite de H. Jeanmaire (1913 et 1939), a montré la réalité de cette représentation chez les Grecs : dans le cas des cryptes spartiates, qui erraient aux confins de la Laconie (1991 : 152, 161-163, 200-204), et dans celui des éphèbes athéniens casernés aux frontières de l'Attique (1991 : 194-200).

Plusieurs lieux du film jouent ce rôle de zones de confins. Il s'agit d'abord du cimetière des éléphants (*Roi Lion* 1 : 8-9, 44-45), qui est précédé de hauteurs, nous dit le script, lesquelles représentent la limite de la Terre des lions (*beyond that rise at the northern border*). Dans une autre direction, la frontière semble constituée par une double barrière naturelle : lorsque Simba fuit le royaume de son père mort, il franchit successivement une épaisse haie de chardons où s'égratigne la hyène qui le pourchasse[71] (*Roi Lion* 2 : 48-49), ensuite le désert où il manque de mourir (*Roi Lion* 1 : 44-45; *Roi Lion* 2 : 54). Il est enfin recueilli, agonisant, par Timon et Pumbaa, à la lisière du désert, à l'orée d'une forêt vierge (*Roi Lion* 1 : 46-47; *Roi Lion* 2 : 56-57). C'est là qu'il va vivre en leur compagnie sa période d'ensauvagement initiatique (*Roi Lion* 1 : 56-57).

En effet, dans ces confins règne la sauvagerie, ici littéralement la «loi de la jungle», et sévissent les barba-

res. Le cimetière des éléphants est présenté comme un territoire extérieur au domaine royal, zone de ténèbres[72], où errent des bandes de hyènes. Les hyènes sont aux lions ce que les hilotes sont aux Spartiates, et les loubards qui rôdent par bandes dans les «banlieues» sont aux bourgeois des beaux quartiers. On a d'ailleurs reproché aux concepteurs du dessin animé de leur avoir donné l'accent des mauvais garçons des ghettos noirs américains (*we'll kill ya!!!*).

C'est dans ces zones de confins que les jeunes Spartiates qu'on appelle les «cryptes» (du grec *kruptein*, «cacher») devaient séjourner pour une période probatoire plus ou moins longue (un an ou un hiver : Vidal-Naquet 1991 : 201), avant de revenir prendre leur place, en tant que citoyens désormais de plein droit, dans la communauté politique. Ces zones sont le lieu des rites de passage. On retrouve donc la célèbre opposition de Lévi-Strauss entre le cru et le cuit, la barbarie et la civilisation, la sauvagerie et la culture, la nature et la société (Jeanmaire, 1913 et 1939; Vidal-Naquet, 1991 : 162-163) : «Pour que le rite s'inscrive également dans l'espace, il faut que celui-ci soit lui aussi divisé : espace humanisé de la vie en société, espace des marges, qui pourra être à volonté, lieu sacré symbolique, *"brousse"* [mes italiques] réelle ou figurée, *forêt ou montagne* [mes italiques], il importe peu pourvu qu'il soit senti comme autre : à la limite, l'enfer et le paradis de la "marelle" fournissent un excellent exemple». Dans les confins de la Laconie, habités par les hilotes, les jeunes Spartiates vagabondaient sans ressources, se nourrissant comme ils pouvaient, «nus» disent les textes, c'est-à-dire armés d'un seul poignard, contrairement à l'hoplite, soldat civique, complètement équipé (Vidal-Naquet, 1991 : 162 et 201). L'éphèbe athénien, quant à lui, est dit *péripolos*, c'est-à-dire «patrouilleur des pourtours» (Vidal-Naquet, 1991 : 153).

Tout l'épisode central, avec la rencontre de Pumbaa et de Timon est représentatif de cette période initiatique. À l'instar des cryptes et des éphèbes, ils vivent dans les montagnes boisées, en dehors du territoire politique. Le script parle de «jungle dans une fissure géologique (*rift*)», de «chutes d'eau et de terrain accidenté»[73] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 56-57; *Roi Lion* 2 : 72-73). Timon et Pumbaa sont explicitement des marginaux. Dans le casting, Timon est présenté comme une mangouste (*meerkat*, sorte de mangouste diurne, un suricate) *outcast*, c'est-à-dire un proscrit, hors-la-loi; et, lors de sa rencontre avec Simba, il exulte : «Ah tu es un hors-la-loi! c'est super, nous aussi!»[74]. Le principe dans ces zones est : pas de règles, pas de soucis! ce que résument l'adage et la chanson *hakuna matata*[75] (*Roi Lion* 2 : 62-63). C'est donc le contraire d'un espace de sociabilité. À cet égard, il faut noter

que la mangouste porte le nom du célèbre misanthrope athénien du Ve siècle avant l'ère chrétienne, ce qui ne peut être un hasard. Timon, fils d'Echékratidas, avait une solide réputation de misanthropie dont de nombreux textes anciens se font l'écho[76]. Antoine, à ce qu'on dit, lui dédia même un sanctuaire, le *Timôneion* (Plutarque, *Antoine*, 69). Mais, plus que les sources antiques, c'est vraisemblablement l'œuvre de Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, mieux connue du public anglo-saxon, qui a inspiré les scénaristes (voir note 5), comme elle avait inspiré Schiller (*Der Menschenfeind*). Timon, c'est celui qui hait les hommes, fuit le monde, la civilisation, et se réfugie dans une caverne (*Woods and cave, near the seashore. Timon of Athens*, Acte IV, scène 3).

> *Nothing I'll bear from thee*
> *But nakedness, thou detestable town!*
> *Take thou that too, with multiplying bans.*
> *Timon will to the woods, where he shall find*
> *Th' unkindest beast more kinder than*
> *mankind.*
>
> (*Timon of Athens*, Acte IV, scène I).

Rôdant dans la montagne et les forêts, les jeunes Spartiates mangent ce qu'il peuvent, au petit bonheur, selon le scholiaste de Platon (cité par Vidal-Naquet, 1991 : 162 et 201). Le Timon de Shakespeare se nourrit de racines (Acte IV, scène 3). De même, Timon et Pumbaa se nourrissent de larves. Ce sont ces mets, qui lui répugnent de prime abord, que Simba devra partager[77] (*Roi Lion* 1 : 49; *Roi Lion* 2 : 59). Sans doute aurait-il pu se procurer une nourriture plus conforme aux besoins de son espèce, à son instinct : plus loin, en effet, on verra Nala chasser dans la forêt. C'est donc son mode de vie et non sa nature qui l'oblige à un tel régime. En changeant de milieu, en passant de l'espace civilisé, et plus précisément civique, à l'espace de la sauvagerie, il perd sa capacité de «socialisation léonine» (si on m'autorise cette expression). Ces larves et vers représentent évidemment une nourriture inadéquate pour un lion, exactement comme le cru est inadéquat pour un homme. Dans le résumé du film *Jungle King*, dont on a dit qu'il aurait inspiré les concepteurs du *Lion King*, il est précisé que «ses besoins en protéines animales, du fait de sa nature carnivore, sont satisfaits par la consommation de larves» (*and the carnivorous characters get their animal protein from eating bugs*)[78]. D'évidence, s'agissant d'un lion, il était difficile d'opposer le cuit au cru. Dès lors, les scénaristes ont choisi de souligner le contraste entre une nourriture normale, «civilisée» (du moins pour un lion), c'est-à-dire fruit d'un effort, d'un travail (la chasse), et une nourriture inadéquate, «sauvage», disponible sans peine.

La terre des lions, comme la *polis* grecque, comme nos cités, est bornée par des zones de non-droit, où se passent des choses dangereuses, où l'individu se replonge en sauvagerie, où les règles de la vie en société n'ont plus cours.

> *...Piety and fear*
> *Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,*
> *Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,*
> *Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,*
> *Degrees, observances, customs and laws,*
> *Decline to your confounding contraries*
> *And let confusion live.*
>
> (*Timon of Athens*, Acte IV, scène I).

Lorsque Scar prend le pouvoir, ce sont les hyènes qui le secondent : on assiste alors au déferlement des «sauvages» au sein, et même au centre politique et cérémoniel du territoire civique, dont ils vont prendre le contrôle; comme si toute distinction était abolie, celle qui permettait notamment à la société de s'affirmer face à son double négatif. Ce sont les Huns devant Orléans, c'est le XVIe arrondissement livré aux loubards des banlieues, les barbares à nos portes.

En guise de conclusion

Ce ne saurait être une coïncidence si tous ces traits correspondent à des caractéristiques que les anthropologues ont observées dans les États primitifs. Le film reproduit des archétypes politiques qui hantent encore notre inconscient collectif, tout autant que les études d'histoire et d'anthropologie sociale. Cette vision prébureaucratique de l'État, ou «prémoderne» si l'on veut, inspire ici une œuvre de fiction prioritairement destinée aux enfants. En ce sens, il s'agit bien d'une entreprise de «réenchantement du Monde», d'une *Wiederzauberung der Welt*, pour parodier la célèbre expression de Max Weber.

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tre que ce texte soit illustré de scènes du film; en dépit de leurs efforts, la chose ne fut cependant pas possible du fait des conditions disons...''léonines'' des Editions Hachette. D'autre part, je tiens à remercier mes deux filles, Aliénor et Isaura, grâce à qui j'ai découvert *in illo tempore* le film *Le Roi lion* et dont les pressantes questions d'enfants ont suscité mes interrogations, ainsi que Melle Clarisse Perot pour m'avoir fait découvrir l'un des albums qui me servent ici de support iconographique.

> Le texte de référence est le suivant : Semi-Official ASCII Version of the Lion King Script, text établi au départ par : Phil "Stokowski" Pollard http://www.lionking.org/scripts/script.txt.
>
> Les deux ouvrages illustrés auxquels il sera fait référence pour l'illustration de mon propos sont les suivants :
>
> • *Le Roi Lion*, Disney-Hachette Éditions, coll. «Les grands films. Disney classique», Paris, s.d. (abrégé *Roi Lion* 1)
> • *Le Roi Lion*, Disney-Hachette Éditions, coll. «Disney, Cinéma», Paris, 1994 (abrégé *Roi Lion* 2).

Notes

1 Striking panoramic view of the Presentation.

2 All the groups of herds are there and making noise as in the presentation of Simba.

3 Traditional soll eine Herrschaft heißen, wenn ihre Legimität sich stützt und geglaubt wird auf Grund der Heiligkeit altüberkommener („von jeher bestehender") Ordnungen und Herrengewalten. Der Herr (oder : die mehreren Herren) sind kraft traditional überkommener Regel bestimmt. Gehorcht wird ihnen kraft der durch die Tradition ihnen zugewiesenen Eigenwürde.

4 "Charisma" soll eine als außeralltäglich...geltende Qualität einer Persönnlichkeit heißen, um derentwillen sie als mit übernatürlichen oder übermenschlichen oder mindestens spezifisch außeralltäglichen, nicht jedem andern zugänglichen Kräften oder Eigenschaften [begabt] oder als gottgesandt oder als vorbildlich und deshalb als „Führer" gewertet wird.

5 Voir, par exemple, http://www.shakespeare.com/reviews/london2000/lionking.html et http://www.lionking.org/text/Hamlet-TM.html.

6 M. Pastoureau, *L'histoire*, 114, Sept. 1988 : 16-24.

7 Look at the stars. The great kings of the past look down on us from those stars.

8 Just remember that those kings will always be there to guide you....And so will I.

9 You two turtle-doves have no choice. It's a tradition...going back generations.

10 Nala: {*Voice catching, as though barely under control*} We've really needed you at home Simba: {*Quieter*} No one needs me. Nala: Yes, we do! You're the king.

11 Claessen, 1978 : 60 : «une charte mythique et une généalogie royale le relient aux forces surnaturelles».

12 Muphasa: You have forgotten who you are.... Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life. Remember who you are. You are my son, and the one true king.

13 Rafiki: The king...has returned.

14 Sarabi: It's over. There is nothing left. We have only one choice. We must leave Pride Rock.

15 Voir, entre autres, Lecoq, 1997 : 163-164.

16 Zazu bows to Muphasa, who smiles and nods at him. Appearance of Rafiki, the mandrill. He passes between ranks of animals, who bow to him. Rafiki and Muphasa embrace.

17 Simba starts up and pauses to hug Rafiki as his father did.

18 Rafiki [Friend]: A mandrill whose role is of a mystical shaman. Outwardly he appears to be crazy, but in reality he is very wise.

19 Rafiki is doing hand paintings on the wall. We see he is completing a lion cub completing the ceremonial crown in the painting...he reaches up and rubs his hand across the cub painting, smearing it.

20 Next we see Rafiki's hand snatch some it out of the air. He sniffs it, grunts, and bounds down into his tree. He pours the milkweed into a turtle shell, sifts it around, and then eats from the same kind of fruit he anointed Simba with. Examining the milkweed floss again, realization dawns on his face. Simba? He's—he's alive? He he—he's alive! {*He laughs*}.

21 Rafiki: {*Magically in front of Simba again*}.

22 Simba: First, I'm gonna take your stick. {*Simba tosses Rafiki's staff to the side.*} Rafiki: No, no, no, no! Not the stick!

23 Rafiki motions for Simba to ascend Pride Rock as king.

24 Rafiki puts the juice and sand he collects on Simba's brow.

25 Striking panoramic view of the Presentation/Rafiki holds Simba up for the crowd to view/Sarabi and I didn't see you at the presentation of Simba/All the groups of herds are there and making noise as in the presentation of Simba/Rafiki appears, holding Chaka. He lifts him to present him to the crowd.

26 Ainsi, en *1 Rois*, 1, 32-35, le roi David veut faire reconnaître son fils Salomon comme son légitime successeur : «Le roi David dit : "Appelez-moi Sadoq, le prêtre, Nathan, le prophète, et Benayahou, fils de Yehoyada". Ils entrèrent devant le roi, et le roi leur dit : "Prenez avec vous les serviteurs de votre seigneur, vous ferez monter Salomon, mon fils, sur ma propre mule [qui est une monture royale dans le monde sémitique] et vous le ferez descendre à Guihôn. Là, Sadoq, le prêtre, et Nathan le prophète l'*oindront* comme roi sur Israël; vous sonnerez du cor et vous direz : Vive le roi Salomon! Vous remonterez derrière lui, il viendra s'asseoir sur mon trône, et c'est lui qui règnera à ma place : c'est lui que j'ai institué comme chef sur Israël et sur Juda"».

27 Rafiki who is shaking his head in the distance.

28 Rafiki: Simba? He's—he's alive? He he—he's alive! {*He laughs*}.

29 The clouds part and a sunbeam highlights Rafiki and Simba.

30 The sunrise illuminates the top of Pride Rock impressively.

31 The lion roar calling the animals to gather to Pride Rock for the Ceremony.

32 Mufasa: Sarabi and I didn't see you at the presentation of Simba. Scar: {*Faking astonishment*} That was today? Oh, I feel simply awful. {*He turns and start scraping his claws on the rock wall. Zazu cringes at the sound.*} Scar: {*Admiring his claws*}...Must have slipped my mind. Zazu: Yes, well, as slippery as your mind is, as the king's brother, you should have been first in line! (Pour l'empire achéménide, voir Petit sous presse [b].)

33 Muphasa: Everything you see exists together, in a delicate balance. As king, you need to understand that balance, and respect all the creatures—from the crawling ant to the leaping antelope.

34 Zazu: {*Interrupting and with urgency*} Sire! Hyenas! In the Pride Lands!

35 Muphasa: {*Gentle laugh*} 'Cause nobody messes with your dad.

36 I'm afraid I'm at the shallow end of the gene pool.

37 Simba slowly crosses the desolated land./Seeing the desolation.

38 A far view of Pride Rock. Almost all of the coloring is in gray./it is painted in grays.

39 Most of the plants and trees appear to be dead/Nala: Everything's destroyed./Mostly lacking in life/Sarabi: {*Calmly*} Scar, there is no food. The herds have moved on.

40 *Nala: There's no food. No water. Simba, if you don't do something soon, everyone will starve.*

41 Il y a d'ailleurs contradiction, car le ciel est sombre (à deux reprises est utilisé le mot *gray*), alors que, lorsque le roi est là, il est radieux : c'est là une erreur occidentale de voir dans le ciel bleu un signe favorable (cf. les rois faiseurs de pluie africains).

42 If you were half the king Mufasa was you would nev....

43 Nala: Everything's destroyed. There's no food. No water. Simba, if you don't do something soon, everyone will starve.

44 Time switch to the savannah in full bloom again.

45 Il estime cependant (1981 : 64 et 80) que «*the direct relationship is found in Africa only*», ce avec quoi on ne peut pas être d'accord (cf. Carlier, 1984 et De Polignac, 1984).

46 Scar's army of hyenas is goose-stepping across the floor of the cave, now stylized into a Nazi-esque quadrangle.

47 A pair of geysers, which then erupt.

48 Claessen, 1978 : 575; sur leur recrutement, Claessen, 1981 : 60 : ce sont des «...functionaries fulling tasks in the governmental apparatus..."specialists" are more on the national level [plus qu'à l'échelon local] ». Kurtz, 1981 : 178 : «The state refers to a set of centralized bureaucracies that is staffed by political and administrative functionaries....»

49 Angl. gopher=spermophile : Gopher: {*Saluting*} Sir. News from the underground.

50 Zazu bows to Muphasa, who smiles and nods at him.

51 «Der Herr rekrutiert seine Beamten zwar zunächst und in erster Linie aus den ihm kraft leibherrlicher Gewalt Unterworfenen, Sklaven und Hörigen». Weber, 1922 : 4 «Die Diener sind in völliger persönnlicher Abhängigkeit vom Herrn...»

52 Zazu: If this is where the monarchy is headed Count me out! Out of service, out of Africa I wouldn't hang about... aagh!

53 Zazu: I, madam, am the king's majordomo.

54 Zazu: Yes, sire. You ARE the king. I...I....Well, I only mentioned it to illustrate the differences in your royal managerial approaches. {*Nervous laugh*}.

55 Zazu: Checking in...with the morning report.

56 Voir ma traduction http://thorstein.veblen.free.fr/pdf/weber_petit.pdf : «Sur presque tous ces points le patrimonialisme patriarchal influence différemment le style de vie. Quelle que soit sa forme, le féodalisme est la domination du petit nombre, de ceux qui possèdent l'habileté militaire».

57 He roars. The lionesses roar in reply.

58 Scar: You see them? {*pointing to the horde of hyenas on the rocks above*} They think I'M king.{*Nala appears with the rest of the lionesses.*} Nala: Well, we don't. Simba is the rightful king.

59 «Le patrimonialisme patriarchal est la souveraineté d'un seul sur la masse. Il requiert généralement des "fonctionnaires" comme organes de gouvernement, tandis que le féodalisme réduit ce besoin au maximum. Pour autant qu'il ne s'appuie pas sur une armée patrimoniale d'origine étrangère, il [le "patrimonialisme"] repose essentiellement sur le bon vouloir des sujets, ce dont le féodalisme peut se passer dans une large mesure. Contre les aspirations des Ordres privilégiés, qui peuvent le menacer, le patriarchalisme se sert des masses, qui ont toujours été son soutien naturel. L'idéal que glorifient partout les légendes de masse, c'est le "bon" prince, et non le héros. Le patrimonialisme patriarchal doit donc se légitimer en tant que garant du "bien-être" des sujets, à leur égard et à ses propres yeux. L' "État-providence" est le mythe du patrimonialisme, qui ne découle pas du libre compagnonnage d'une fidélité promise, mais du rapport autoritaire de père à enfant : le "père du pays" ["*Landesvater*"] est l'idéal des États patrimoniaux».

60 Scar: They've [*les hyènes*] a glimmer of potential if allied to my vision and brain.

61 Scar...we shall rise to greet the dawning of a new era... {*The hyenas start emerging, casting eerie green shadows and laughing hollowly*}...in which lion and hyena come together, in a great and glorious future! {*Scar ascends Pride Rock as the hyenas appear in full force.*}

62 Voir note 59.

63 He runs down towards two lionesses (Sarabi and Sarafina). Sarafina is giving Nala a bath. Music is light, almost jazzy. Pan flute lead.

64 Muphasa: Look, Simba. Everything the light touches is our kingdom.

65 Simba: Everything the light touches. {*Simba looks all around. He views the rip-rap [abrupt] canyon to the north*} What about that shadowy place? Muphasa: That's beyond our borders. You must never go there, Simba./Scar: He didn't show you what's beyond that rise at the northern border...?

66 Zazu: We're way beyond the boundary of the Pride Lands.

67 Shenzi: Do you know what we do to kings who step out of their kingdom?

68 All the groups of herds are there.

69 The lion roar calling the animals to gather to Pride Rock for the Ceremony.

70 Sarabi: It's over. There is nothing left. We have only one choice. We must leave Pride Rock.

71 ...the bushes. The Hyenas make their way off the cliffs back to the Pride Lands.

72 Simba: Everything the light touches. {Simba looks all around. He views the rip-rap [abrupt] canyon to the north} What about that shadowy place?/ Scar: promise me you'll never visit that dreadful place.

73 Timon pulls back a fern leaf, revealing a beautiful view of a rift-jungle. Waterfalls and rugged terrain make a beautiful view.

74 Timon: An outcast meerkat./Timon: Ahh. You're an outcast! That's great, so are we.

75 Hakuna Matata!: It means no worries.

76 Aristophane, Lysistrata, 807-820; et plusieurs épigrammes; cf. aussi Plutarque, Alcibiade : 16, 9.

77 Timon: Nope. Listen, kid; if you live with us, you have to eat like us. Hey, this looks like a good spot to rustle up some grub.

78 http://www.cs.indiana.edu/~tanaka/Tezuka_Disney/tezuka_disney_3_satonaka.txt

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Who is Takatāpui? Māori Language, Sexuality and Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Ka ngaro te reo, ka ngaro taua, pera i te ngaro o te moa
If the language be lost, man will be lost, as dead as the moa —Maori proverb presented at the Waitangi Tribunal on the Te Reo Māori Claim (1986)

Abstract: This paper is an introductory investigation into the complex relations between sexuality, language and Māori indigenous identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Through an examination of the development and proliferation of a Māori language term (*takatāpui*) for "gay" and "lesbian" Māori over the past 20 years, I analyze the socio-political implications of language use in identity discourses and the multiple interpretative possibilities that may be generated when a subaltern or minority language is utilized in relation to a minority identification located in an Anglo-postcolonial society.

Keywords: Homosexuality, language, identity, indigeneity

Résumé Cet article présente une investigation préliminaire des relations complexes entre le sexualité, la langue et l'identité des Indigènes Maori dans Aotearoa/Nouvelle Zélande. Au moyen d'un examen du développement et de la prolifération de la langue de Maori (*takatāpui*) désignant «gays» et «lesbiennes» les Māori au cours des vingt dernières années, j'analyse les implications sociopolitiques des usages linguistiques dans les discours d'identité et les possibilités interprétatives multiples qui peuvent être produites quand une langue subalterne ou minoritaire est utilisée par rapport à l'identification à une minorité située dans une société Anglo-postcoloniale.

Mots-clés : Homosexualité, langue, identité, indigénéité

Introduction

In Aotearoa/New Zealand[1] the dominant language of everyday life for the majority of the country's population is English. It is also a society in which "gay" is the most commonly utilized term for "homosexual identity" in public institutions such as the government and media as well as in more informal day-to-day conversations. However, New Zealand is also home to an indigenous population known as Māori who consist of approximately 15% of the national population (*Te Puni Kōkiri* : 2000, 13). Prior to colonization, the Māori spoke a language which is today referred to as *"te Reo Māori"* (the Māori language; sometimes referred to as *te Reo*), although in contemporary Aotearoa, it is estimated that only between 4 and 8% of the Māori population are fluent in this language. According to most reports, despite a major language revitalization movement spanning over 20 years, *te Reo Māori* remains in danger of disappearing or being reduced to a language of "ritual" only.

However, in Māori media and in discussions with a number of Māori individuals and groups[2] over the past five years, I have noted an increase in the use of a *te Reo Māori* term—*takatāpui*—as a way of identifying oneself as homosexual and Māori.[3] The increasing presence of this term raises a number of questions about language in relation to sexual and other identifications: How does language figure in the negotiation of same sex desires and identities amongst an indigenous group who live as a minority in an Anglo-European colonized society? How central is language to these negotiations? Are there distinct forms of same sex talking and text-making amongst this group whose primary language is that of the colonizer and whose native language is only spoken

fluently by a minority? Is language the primary boundary marker for sexual and ethnic identifications? What other socio-political boundaries does language interact with (or transgress) in identity-making projects?

This article is an introductory investigation into questions addressing the complex relations between sexuality, language and identity in Aotearoa. I am particularly interested in teasing out the socio-political implications and linguistic practices of identity discourses, and analyzing the multiple interpretative possibilities that occur when a subaltern or minority language (or specific terms derived from that language) is utilized in relation to sexual identification in a postcolonial settler society. I argue that while the development of minority language terms to replace English sexual terminologies and the insertion of these terms into predominantly English language contexts are empowering for some, there may be others who do not agree with or feel comfortable utilizing this terminology for a variety of reasons. The different reactions to just one minority language term for sexual identity that are presented here indicate the complex relations that individuals of a minority group have with issues of identity and sexuality in a society created through colonization.

This paper therefore not only underlines a foundational principle in sociolinguistic inquiry—that language is a key domain of struggle over difference and inequality and a means of conducting that struggle (Heller, 2001)—it also contributes towards a more nuanced understanding of the generation of terms for sexual identities, or to put it slightly differently, it highlights the intersectional character of sexuality through analyzing how sexual subjectivities are linked to language. We will see how articulations about sexual self/identity are structured through debates about language, how articulations about language are structured through debates about self/identity, and how this dialectical relationship is itself embedded in the cultural particularities of a contemporary Anglo-Western settler society.

I will also stress that there is a contextual connection between language, identity and authenticity when *takatāpui* is articulated. In some discussions, fluency in *te Reo Māori* may operate as an index of one's ability to be fully Māori, such that even the insertion of a single term like "*takatāpui*" into an English conversational context carries politicized symbolic value through invoking an association with an authentic cultural identity. Although this value is not shared by all Māori by any means, it highlights how language and identity may be conceptualized as essential, mutually constitutive domains reflecting a dominant Western cultural logic

that places colonized populations identified as "indigenous" into highly restricted representational regimes. However, in other conversational contexts a range of English terms like "poofter," "gay," or "queen" are utilized alongside of *takatāpui* with no apparent different intent, reference, or meaning, indicating synonymy across the linguistic divide and, by inference, uncoupling the politicized value of linguistic competence from an "authentic" ethnic identification.

Finally, I will follow a recent turn in anthropological research on sexual identities emphasizing the importance of *historical* context for understanding the contemporary popularity and meanings of *takatāpui*[4]: We shall see how the increasing presence of and contemporary meanings associated with this term are due to the influence of three distinct but related sociopolitical movements that began in the late 1970s and continued to occupy centre stage in the public culture of New Zealand throughout the 1980s and 1990s: the homosexual law reform movement, the response to HIV/AIDS, and what has come to be known as the Māori cultural and linguistic "renaissance."

I hasten to add that the preliminary observations I offer about issues of alter-sexualities, language and linguistic practice in contemporary Māori society should not be assumed to be "discoveries" in any sense of the word. As I will outline in more detail below, over the past 20 years there has been a proliferation of writing and research on alternative sexualities in Māoridom by professionals in New Zealand's sexual and reproductive health sectors such as the New Zealand Aids Foundation, researchers in Māori Studies Departments in New Zealand universities and in Māori literature (both in *te Reo Māori* and English). My point is that in the social sciences, and in most Anglo-European dominated media and institutions, there continues to be very little information on or theorizing about this topic. This article is therefore dedicated to providing a bridge between what is already being identified and analyzed in some academic and social domains, and segments of academia and society that remain relatively unaware of these developments.

I begin with a brief overview of anthropological research on alternative genders/sexualities amongst indigenous groups[5] in North America, outlining the relatively limited theoretical and thematic lenses through which sexuality has been analyzed. The most prolific discussion in this area has been the debate over terminology and categorization of the Native American "berdache" or "two spirits," a phenomenon that some anthropologists claim is an example of "third gender." This debate pro-

vides some insight into questions of sexuality amongst contemporary North American indigenous societies and provides interesting comparisons to the situation in contemporary Aotearoa. Then, following a brief summary of anthropological research on language and sexuality in Māori society I will present a more detailed analysis of the recent history of the term *takatāpui* providing more detail on the three sociopolitical movements mentioned above. I will conclude with comments from some Māori men that begin to convey the interpretative and contextual complexity of minority language sexual terminologies in daily discourse and practice in contemporary Aotearoa.

Anthropology, Language and Sexual Terminologies in Indigenous Societies

Over the past 20 years, there has been a steady increase in anthropological research focussing on sexuality. However, as Kath Weston has pointed out, much of the ethnographic material produced in the 1970s and '80s was problematic in its emphasis on culturally discrete and different sexual practices in non-Western societies which ran the risk of perpetuating "orientalist" stereotypes and further reinforcing the implicitly primitive "them" vs. modern "us" binary (1993). This critique also applies to much of the research on "indigenous" societies; "the indigenes" are located in places where the colonizing population is said to manifest a modern, cosmopolitan identity and the colonized population is said to have "a" traditional indigenous identity that is represented through a totalizing, static, pre-European contact cultural identity, revealing "indigenous" to be a very modern term and thus complicating the borders of the us/them binary.[6]

However, anthropologists (as well as others) investigating gay and lesbian communities in North America, Britain and other Anglo-American societies have been uncovering the social diversity within them, rendering the concept of "a" gay or "a" lesbian identity or community problematic.[7] These new ethnographies have situated sexuality in relation to numerous other sociological categories such as class, race, ethnicity, age, or political orientation, rendering it much more complex in its definition and application: What's true "at home" is most likely true for "out there" as well, but this complexity is only now being recognized.

However, when it comes to issues of sexuality in indigenous North American societies, anthropology's track record continues to be spotty at best: In her recent bibliography on gender and sexuality in Native American Societies, JoAnn Woodsum noted that scholarship

on Native women has been slowly increasing over the past two decades, but scholarship on Native sexuality and gender variance has been relatively sparse (Woodsum, 1995). Nevertheless, there is one "type" of Native American that has been studied and debated in great depth by anthropologists, popularly known as "the berdache" or "two-spirit," which some claim to be a "third gender category." This is a strongly debated issue, and my brief summary here will only do it injustice, but it is important to mention if only because it represents a sustained (bordering on fetishistic) discussion amongst anthropologists on issues of sexuality, language and terminology amongst a population colonized by Anglo-Americans and it is therefore relevant to the Māori experience.

According to some anthropologists, it appears that throughout pre-contact Native North America, many societies had an institutionalized role for men who dressed as women and/or specialized in women's work or for women who dressed as men and/or did men's work.[8] Although there was great variance in terms of roles and occupations, men who wore women's clothes and did women's work often became artists, ambassadors and religious leaders and women who "performed" as men often became warriors hunters and chiefs (Roscoe, 1998: 4). But who exactly were they? Were they the Native American version of "homosexuals?" Were they "transsexuals?" Transvestites? Another gender altogether? As Roscoe, Epple and others have pointed out, it is very difficult to find an appropriate label in the English language for this category of person, as any of the above English-language terms carries its own historical, political and cultural baggage. Furthermore, the debate that has ensued in anthropology hasn't been simply one of terminology, for what lies at the foundation of these terms are cultural understandings of language, sex and gender and their relationships to other material and cosmological realms (Epple, 1998; Valentine, 2001).

While much of this material is illuminating for its ability to demonstrate gendered and sexual diversity within Native American societies historically, there is not much anthropological research that focuses on *contemporary* issues of language and sexuality. Roscoe has recently published material on contemporary "Gay American Indians," noting the recent adaptation of the term "two spirits," which some claim as an alternative to both berdache and gay (1998 : 109; see also Roscoe, 1988 and Williams, 1986). Since the 1980s, there has been a cultural revival movement centred on recovery of "berdache" practices, but many Native Americans have not been comfortable with the term "berdache," an

adaptation of a Persian word utilized by Europeans. At the same time, some Native Americans have not been comfortable with the labels "gay" "lesbian" or "bisexual" as these are terms from the colonizer's language that don't properly represent who they are (Roscoe, 1998: 111). Part of the popularity of "two spirits" is due to the fact that it manages to encompass both sexual and ethnic identities, and it is inclusive of men and women. However, Roscoe notes that adaptation of the term is not universal, and that in some reservations outside urban centres one finds a combination of terms that may include local language words for multiple gender individuals alongside more western terms like "gay" or "homosexual" (1998: 112-113). Carolyn Epple goes further by arguing that even such broad categories as "two spirits" "gay" or "alternative sexuality/gender" are not applicable to some Navajo whose understandings of the world, action and personhood are organized in radically different ways. Reducing these individuals to "variations" of Western conceptualized gender/sex categories misrepresents the ways in which they are integrated into a particular Navajo world view (1998, 279-280).

As we will see below, the crafting of "new" sexual subjectivities and their relation to culturally distinct world views in Native North American societies and the role and significance of language(s) in relation to these subjectivities has numerous parallels with the Māori situation, and begins to illustrate the complex cultural and political terrain through which indigenous sexual identifications are forged in a postcolonial setting.

Anthropology, Sexuality and Language in Contemporary Māori Society

When we turn to issues of alter-sexualities in contemporary Māori society, we get next to nothing from anthropology. My library searches so far have uncovered only one article published by two anthropologists in 1985 which speaks directly towards questions of homosexuality in Māori society. The authors, Stephen O. Murray and Manuel Arboleda, were responding to a 1974 article published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry which concluded that homosexuality did not exist among the Māori prior to European contact because there is no mention of it in the historical records. Murray and Arboleda noted a number of reasons why this reasoning is faulty: First, the absence of any mention of homosexuality in early documentation of Māori society has more to do with the morals and values of the authors, that is, 19th-century Europeans. (Arboleda and Murray, 1985: 130). Second, the absence of words for homosexu-

ality in te Reo Māori may indicate the possible absence of an institutionalized homosexual role, but not necessarily of homosexual behavior per se (131). And third, a number of neighbouring Polynesian societies have well documented traditions of "gender-defined homosexual" roles, increasing the likelihood that a similar role may have existed amongst pre-contact Māori. However, we should keep in mind the above debate over the appropriateness of labelling this role "homosexual" or "third gender," when it may in fact have more to do with context and cosmology than sexual or gendered proclivity (see Besnier 1994).

In contrast to this lone and suggestive rather than conclusive anthropological statement about Māori sexualities in relation to linguistic evidence, there has been a fluorescence of material from other professions and disciplines: In literature, there have been a number of novels, biographies and autobiographical pieces on growing up and experiencing being homosexual and Māori. One recent example comes from Witi Ihimaera, an internationally renowned Māori writer who recently published a novel in which the primary character is Michael, a gay Māori man confronting issues of sexuality and identity in contemporary Aotearoa. In the following excerpt, Michael is having a conversation about boyfriends with his "staunch" Māori activist friend Roimata:

> ...Roimata said, "Don was Māori, he had mana and, from what I've heard, he wasn't called Long Dong Silver for nothing. He was totally suitable but what did you do? You rejected him and became a—a potato queen."
>
> "Look" I answered. "I like white boys. When I put my brown hands on them it makes me feel so dirty."
>
> Roimata knew I was joking. Even so, she couldn't resist pushing home the point.
>
> "I only wish, Michael dear, that you would see that you've been colonised twice over. First by the Pakeha.[9] Second by the gay Pakeha...don't you understand, Michael? The issues of identity and space—of sovereignty, of tino rangatiratanga—that our people have been fighting for within Pakeha society are the same issues for gay Māori within Pakeha gay society today!" (Ihimaera, 2000: 197)

In this passage Roimata foregrounds the solidarity and content of Māori identity over "gay" identity, and Michael responds by acknowledging that his sexual desire is racialized but that he is not ashamed of this. The tension between ethnic, racial and sexual identifications was felt by a number of the Māori men I spoke

with, and language was often identified by them as a site of that tension. I will return to this point below, but suffice to say that Māori literature has been at the forefront of presenting issues of identity, authenticity and sexuality that I am addressing in this paper.

"Sexuality" has also become a key topic in some Māori studies departments in New Zealand universities.[10] In the area of public health research, there has been some important work generated primarily through the HIV/AIDS crisis and the need for better understandings of the ways in which socio-cultural and economic factors are related to prevention and treatment of the virus. One of the most important publications in this sector has come from the New Zealand Aids Foundation and is entitled "Male Call/Waea Mai, Tāne Mā" (1997). It consists of 12 reports, with one focusing on Māori men who have sex with men, providing some rich data based on a nation-wide telephone survey with 1852 respondents, 170 of whom identified as Māori.

One section of this report focusses on sexual identity, in which respondents were allowed to choose as many labels as they felt appropriate. On average, Māori respondents chose 2.6 "identities"—the most popular identity term was "gay," with just over two thirds of all Māori respondents choosing it. Second most popular was the term "homosexual," at 58.8% (Aspin, Hughes, Reid, Robinson, Saxton, Segedin, Worth, 1997: 7). However, the report also notes that proportionately fewer Māori than non-Māori chose gay or homosexual, indicating that these terms are not appropriate to all Māori by any means. The third and fourth most popular identity terms amongst Māori respondents were "bisexual" and "queer" respectively, followed by takatāpui, which was chosen by 31.1% (1997: 8). Although it is fifth in terms of self-descriptive popularity amongst the respondents, I would like to focus on how the emergence of the term takatāpui and discussions about it are important in demonstrating how language constitutes and is constituted through sexual and cultural identity labels but that no clear cut alignment emerges between categories and practices of language, cultural identity and sexuality.

The "Male Call" report notes that, "Historically, the term takatāpui was used to describe an intimate companion of the same sex. The word features in Williams Dictionary which was first published in 1844. However, in contemporary Aotearoa society the term is understood to describe same sex attraction, and it embraces men, women and transgender people" (1997: 25).[11] In my research on the usage of this term in Māori dictionaries and amongst Māori informants, I have found that the distinction between the past and present meanings

is not quite so clear-cut: When I looked up the words "homosexual" and "gay" in the English/Māori section of Te Matatiki, a dictionary of words that has been produced or adapted by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (The Māori Language Commission—MLC), there were two terms: tāne takāpui, and tāne mate tāne, the latter which roughly translates to men who desire men (MLC 1992).[12] In the Māori-English section, takatāpui was translated as "intimate companion of the same sex," In other contemporary dictionaries like The H.M. Ngata Dictionary, takatāpui is also translated as "close companion" or "intimate friend of the same sex," a definition which does not by any means clearly communicate sexual desire or preference for someone of the same gender.

I decided to call the MLC office in Wellington to ask why "takatāpui" was not translated as homosexual or gay in their dictionary since it was clearly being utilized in this way by a substantial number of Māori according to the "Male Call" report and my conversations. I expected that this request might take some time to be assigned to the appropriate person and that I might be asked a few questions by MLC staff about why a North American-accented anthropologist based at an Australian university (at that time) wanted to know about the sexual connotations of a Māori term but the MLC receptionist listened to my introduction without asking any questions and immediately forwarded me to one of their "research staff." The MLC researcher informed me (again without any further queries) that my question about takatāpui was a good example of an ongoing debate within the Commission over the importance of retaining "traditional" meanings of words versus the need to adopt, change, or extend older words to fit new concepts or objects. Some MLC members preferred a "purist" approach, trying to maintain the connection between words and their original meanings; they would argue that takatāpui represents a unique concept for which there is no direct English equivalent, and to attach an aspect of sexual relations to it would be to redefine it completely. Other members favoured a more pragmatic approach, arguing that if a Māori word comes to take on new meaning(s) and is widely diffused and recognized throughout Māoridom, then it should be accepted by the MLC. Takāpui as a Māori word for "gay" was developed by the MLC "purists" in the early 1990s—it was an adaptation of the word takatāpui that would allow the latter term to retain its original meaning. However, both the researcher and I agreed it has not been adopted into everyday usage by the wider Māori community.

This debate over "traditional" meanings of Māori words reveals the influence of a discourse of "authentic" indigeneity connected to a "pure" language produced by a faction within a powerful Māori institution responsible for regulating te Reo Māori. The emphasis on language as a source of authentic "traditional" indigeneity is often integrated into a political agenda for Maori sovereignty which I would argue displays the influence of a discourse of modern nationalism and its desire for exclusive linguistic purity attached to exclusive cultural purity. It has been noted that discourses of indigenous authenticity are one mechanism through which groups colonized by Euro-American powers may demonstrate cultural autonomy and ability to resist oppressive assimiliationist agendas yet in many instances they paradoxically reproduce representations of difference developed by the colonizing societies in the first place (Kapac, 1998: Ram, 2000). However, we must remember that some MLC workers recognized language as socially and contextually produced and did not claim that a fixed set of "traditional" linguistic meanings determined "authentic" indigeneity. As we will see below a similar division exists amongst gay Māori men in their relationship to takatāpui as a sign of identity.

Many Māori (of various sexual orientations) who were not associated with the MLC explained to me that their understanding of the word takatāpui up until the last 10-15 years was similar to the Ngata Dictionary definition, but they were now aware of this additional sexualized meaning.[13] While most expressed no opinion about this (which I interpreted as acceptance or tolerance), a few did say that they preferred the "original" definition of "intimate friendship" and thought another word should be developed for "gay" as they liked a specific non-sexualized term for "close friend of the same sex" and preferred to be able to use it without any assumption of a sexual relationship.

Almost all Māori men I have spoken with who utilize takatāpui as a term of self-ascription are aware of its prior non-sexualized definition, and in fact a number identified the person they believed to be the creator of its recent connotative transformation, indicating a keen awareness of new developments in Māori language and a willingness to incorporate innovative usages of it for purposes of self-representation. This ability to pinpoint quite precisely the historical moment in which a word transforms in meaning not only allows us to examine the wider political and social milieu which contributed towards the development of new sexual terminologies and their (various) meanings but also allows us to examine how subaltern languages are related to sociopolitical transformations occurring at local, national and transnational levels.

The emergence and increasing popularity of takatāpui as a term during the 1980s and 1990s can be linked to the combined influence of at least three sociopolitical movements occurring throughout Aotearoa just prior to and during this period: gay and lesbian activism, HIV/AIDS and the Māori political and cultural "renaissance." Let me re-emphasize the mutuality of these three factors before explicating them in detail: that is, no single influence produced current definitions of takatāpui and the sociolinguistic debates around it, demonstrating the historical contingency, politics of and connectivity between linguistic and cultural production (see Ahearn 2001).

Gay and lesbian activism throughout New Zealand (although particularly in urban centres) began to gather momentum in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This movement was dedicated to overturning New Zealand's discriminatory laws against homosexuals, and their primary focus became a national campaign for homosexual law reform (The Homosexual Law Reform Bill was passed in 1986). While the gay media at that time did not mention any presence of Māori within the leadership of the various activist groups,[14] several Māori men I spoke with remembered participating in rallies and protests supporting the passage of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill. However, one transgender individual told me that she and her Māori friends were too busy "trying to get by" and didn't have the time or the resources to become very involved, even though they supported the objectives of the movement in principle. Another self identified takatāpui man told me that he hadn't felt particularly strongly about this movement as he was more interested in dedicating his time to social justice issues for all Māori people. Thus although lesbian and gay activism for homosexual law reform was clearly influential in bringing issues of sexuality to the foreground of public culture in New Zealand it cannot be identified as the only or primary factor bringing about a transformation in Māori sexual terminologies.

The second influence was the rise of HIV/AIDS in Aotearoa throughout the 1980s. HIV/AIDS was rapidly recognized as a threat to Māori people, who at that time were contracting the virus at a disproportionately higher rate than other ethnic groups in New Zealand. The AIDS crisis galvanized the gay community into action, and forced into public circulation what had heretofore been taboo topics. Soon after the establishment of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation in the mid 1980s, a parallel Māori organization, Te Rōpu Tautoko

Trust, was established. Because of limited funding to this organization, their efforts were supplemented by regional initiatives which had their origins in gay urban Māori communities (Aspin, 1996: 48-49). In their policy statements, these regional groups specified *takatāpui* as their key target clientele, reflecting the term's new-found presence and legitimacy at least amongst certain segments of Māori society. Thus by the mid-to-late 1980s, sexual terminologies, practices and identities were increasingly circulated in public institutions such as the government and mainstream media that were simultaneously marking recognition of ethnic differentiation through language differentiation.

The third influence came from the increasingly powerful voices of Māori activist groups who were changing the political and cultural landscape both within Māori society and at a national level: Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, profound and unsettling changes continued in Māori society, one of the most significant being the continuation of a massive population shift from rural to urban centres that had begun in the 1950s. Whereas 10% of the Māori population lived in urban centres in 1936, the percentage had shifted to 76% in 1976 and 86% in 1996 (Spoonly, 1993: 13; *Te Puni Kōkiri*, 2000). However, this demographic shift did not result in socio-economic improvement for many Māori—a recent report published by *Te Puni Kōkiri* (The Ministry of Māori Development—TPK) emphasizes that many disparities between Māori and non-Māori in the areas of income, unemployment, health and education have increased over the past two decades (TPK, 2000: 7).

During this rural to urban shift, there was also a noticeable decline in *te Reo* speakers (TPK, n.d.). Current statistics on "fluent" *te Reo* speakers range from 4.45% to 8% (Statistics New Zealand, 1999; TPK, n.d.). This decline in *te Reo* has been noticed and acted upon by Māori leaders since the 1970s. Hauraki Greenland argues that this generation of leaders was influenced by black power in the United States, women's liberation and "alternative culture" movements, and therefore produced new strategies in which politics and "culture"[15] dovetailed (1991: 92). A key aspect of this cultural revitalization strategy was language, and numerous efforts were initialized throughout Māoridom to revitalize the status and usage of *Te Reo*. One of the first efforts was an adult education program (*Te Atārangi*), followed in the 1980s by the establishment of *Kōhanga Reo* ("language nests"—Māori language pre-schools) which by 1996 had over 14 032 children registered (TPK, 1998: 22). Māori language broadcasting also began in the 1970s and increased its presence on radio and television over

the 1980s. In 1987, the Māori Language Act was passed, making *te Reo Māori* an "official" language of New Zealand, and establishing the Māori Language Commission to protect and promote the use and development of *te Reo Māori* as a living language (TPK, 1998: 5, 13). The Language Act also conferred the right to speak Māori in the courts, tribunals, coroners courts and commissions of inquiry (TPK, 1998: 13). By 1998, the government spending on Māori language outputs amounted to $50 200 000 (NZ).[16]

Thus *te Reo Māori* has occupied centre stage in much public discourse around the "revitalization" or "renaissance" of Māori culture and identity at the same time as "homosexual" culture and identity have been increasingly circulated in public discourses, a confluence that has resulted in some segments of Māori society developing and/or adapting new sexual terminologies from *te Reo Māori*. However, we need to keep in mind that despite the increased recognition and funding of Māori language education, fluent speakers of the language continue to remain a minority. As we shall see below, given this situation what may emerge is a variety of linguistic patterns which depend on an individual's exposure to *te Reo*, immersion in Māori-identified groups and activities, and other context-specific criteria.

The combination of these sociopolitical movements has meant that indigenous language, identities and practices, and sexual language, identities and practices met and combined in highly visible and politicized public discourses at national levels, as well as in more Māori specific (but equally politicized) venues like the *marae*[17] and other urban Māori community networks. This discursive production of a term demonstrates its historical contingency and results in outcomes that are not straightforward in terms of alignments between language, sexuality and identity.

Takatāpui in Context

Most *takatāpui* identified speakers I spoke with indicated that they now utilize this term in addition to or instead of the label "gay" for reasons similar to those put forward by Native American "two spirits" individuals described by Roscoe—*takatāpui* is a term that incorporates both a sense of indigenous identity as well as communicating sexual orientation. It is different from "two spirits" in that it is not English, and therefore operationalizes a code that highlights some form of difference when inserted into an English sociolinguistic context (and is given much of its meaning through this contrast), carrying a political impact every time it used in a predominantly English conversation. However,

while some Māori men were supportive of the non-gendered specificity it encapsulated (because, they said, all Māori of non-heterosexual orientation could find solidarity through common identification as *takatāpui*), others preferred to make a distinction between *takatāpui tāne* (men), *takatāpui wāhine* (women) and *whakawāhine* or *whakatāne* (terms which translate roughly to "becoming" or "making" woman or man, indicating a transcendent or permeable gendered identification), indicating that a powerful model of gendered difference or differentiated conceptualizations of gender undergirded or bisected any construction based upon a uniform "alter" sexual identity (see Epple, 1998 for possible parallels with the Navajo term *nadleehi*). And just to complicate things, one sexual health worker told me that it was important to distinguish between *takatāpui* and *tāne moe tāne* (men who sleep with men), as there are many Māori men who have sexual relations with other men but do not think of themselves as having a homosexual orientation because they also sleep with women.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, not all homosexual-identified Māori men utilize the term *takatāpui* as their only label of self-identification, a situation which is similar to Roscoe's observations of sexuality terms utilized by Native Americans "on the reservation" away from urban centres. I noticed that "outside" the office or official interview, many of these men would use additional terms to describe themselves or others. While having a smoke outside a *marae* or after dinner at someone's home, a conversation could contain a variety of English identity terms such as gay, queen, poof, poofter or gay Māori in addition to takatāpui. Often if a person's name was mentioned that someone was not familiar with, he would ask, "is he a poof?" or "is he gay?" One day at a pub in Wellington I asked Matthew, who works in a Māori organization and is quite active in Māori social and political activities, whether he identified as *takatāpui*, to which he replied, *"Takatāpui*, poofter, fag...they all mean the same thing: we're homosexual, darling, HO-MO-SEXUAL!" Here was a response that was contrary to Roimata's statement about ethnic and sexual identity in the above extract from Ihimaera's novel by contrasting languages to make a point: whereas Roimata prioritized Māori over "gay" identity (while consistently using the English term "gay" throughout her entire speech), Matthew, who is also a dedicated supporter of Māori political sovereignty, prioritized a momentary solidarity of sexual identity demonstrated through his linkage of same-sex identity terms in English and Māori.

However, in another conversation, Paul, who describes himself having a "mixed" heritage of Māori and *Pākeha* claimed that he did not feel comfortable using *takatāpui* for himself, as he had not been greatly involved in Māori affairs for much of his life. He had recently begun to re-establish contact with members of the Māori side of his family, and while this was exciting for him, he did not want to use *te Reo* words to describe himself until he had a better understanding of the language and culture. It would seem that Paul was keenly aware of the political and social implications of language use, as well as the connection between language, authenticity and identity. For him, speaking even a few words of *te Reo* could raise troubling questions for himself and/or to others about the legitimacy or authenticity of his identification as Māori—for the time being, he would continue to publicly align himself with the dominant linguistic sexual term "gay" until he felt that he had sufficient cultural knowledge and linguistic competency to be able to publicly define himself otherwise.

A third individual, Timotei, who works for a sexual health agency, indicated a similar awareness and sensitivity towards issues of authenticity associated with Māori sexual terminologies. Timotei said that he utilized *takatāpui* carefully and strategically, as he was aware of its potential to create solidarity and to alienate, depending on who is being spoken to. He said that amongst Māori who feel comfortable and confident with *te Reo*, who claim a homosexual identification and who felt they had strong attachments to other Māori, he would utilize *takatāpui* freely. But when speaking to Māori whom he thought weren't necessarily "homosexually" identified, who didn't feel confident with *te Reo* and/or who didn't feel very connected to a Māori group or community, he would be much more cautious in using the word, as he felt that they might think he was trying to be superior through his use of Māori linguistic terms.

Paul and Timotei's comments indicate the complex political valences of a minority language associated with an "indigenous" identity located in an English dominated postcolonial society. For some Māori, fluency in *te Reo* is seen as a marker of Māori-'ness', that is, a sense that one is knowledgeable of Māori cultural concepts and therefore secure in one's identity as a Māori. Others feel that if they are not fluent then they will be judged to be less knowledgeable of Māori cultural concepts, and therefore will be viewed as more "alienated" from their Māori identity. Paul and Timotei had thus recognized how, in different contexts, the use of one word had different potential outcomes related to sensitive issues about indigenous identity and the language associated

with it: *Takatāpui* had the potential to unify *or* fracture an identification built around alternative sexual and ethnic identification. Their comments also highlight the performativity of linguistic practice, whereby meaning (or successful communication of meaning) cannot be deduced only through the intentionality of the speaker or the perception of the listener; rather, meaning emerges through a more complex and dense analytic terrain that factors together differentiating individual experiences, specific spatial and temporal contexts, and wider linguistic, socio-cultural and political tropes framing the particular linguistic exchange, thus allowing failure, misinterpretation and/or ambivalence to be as structurally integral to the exchange as mutual comprehension (Kulick, 2000: 268-269; See also Livia and Hall, 1997: 12-13).

The social and political consequences of these terminological twists and turns should not be assumed to be trivial in any way: Māori language and gay/*takatāpui* Māori do not currently occupy the same sociopolitical status as the English language and white European "gays" and "lesbians": *Te Reo Māori* is a minority language in New Zealand, and despite great changes in the last 20 years, it faces a daily battle for survival and legitimacy in a wider social spectrum that is benignly uncaring or aggressively hostile to accommodating its presence on an equal footing with English. This applies to social relations as well. Many *takatāpui*/gay Māori have had negative experiences within Anglo-European gay communities, and some have faced rejection from their own families, so that their relationships with other *takatāpui*/gay Māori men become critically important as a primary support network. As Timotei told me, if these individuals feel rejected by their peers because they are not "Māori enough" due to linguistic incompetence, then isolation, depression and anger may result in mental and/or physical trauma. There is thus a great deal at stake here as the debates over language use, identity and sexuality may have profound consequences for these people's health and well-being.

Conclusion

Takatāpui is a term that communicates more than just sexual identity and indigeneity; it is also/always a political statement when it occurs in public (English) discourse as it conveys information about the current status and import of *te Reo* in Aotearoa in relation to English, which simultaneously conveys a political message about Māori cultural identity in relation to Anglo/*Pakeha* cultural identity. It also reveals a great deal about the recent history of the constructions of gen-

dered and sexual identifications in Māori and non-Māori communities in New Zealand and changes that have occurred to both. Finally, it reflects desire for the expression of a "silenced" sexual subjectivity, but as we have seen, the articulation is problematic as it reveals its origin in and engagement with already circulating discourses of "authentic indigeneity," and authentic "gay" identity, both of which have been produced in a modernizing, colonial context.

We cannot forget that almost two thirds of respondents in the NZAF survey did not choose the term *takatāpui* or chose other English language terms in addition to it, and that "gay" and "homosexual" are still the most prevalent terms of self-identification. This may be due to the recent genesis of the sexualized definition of *takatāpui*, and we need to keep in mind these numbers may be changing—certainly amongst the urban Māori I spoke with, the majority are comfortable with describing themselves as *takatāpui*, albeit in addition to other identification labels. Perhaps the situation in Aotearoa is similar to Roscoe's observations on the "two spirit" spirit term in relation to urban/rural divisions and multiple labelling. The NZAF report suggests that *takatāpui* may be more popular amongst urban Māori than rural (1997: 26),[18] and my research amongst primarily urban Māori has indicated that *takatāpui* often co-exists with other English terms. Clearly, there is still some ambiguity surrounding the term and the fact that many Māori utilize multiple identity labels indicates both the influence and a critical rethinking of English gender and sexuality terminologies, and how these terms are not sufficient for the identities they index.

This discussion of the etymology of one sexuality term and its relationship to language, linguistic practice and cultural identity by no means fully reveals the diversity and complexity of the daily life of those who utilize it, nor should we assume that any simple generalizations about character or personality can be made on the basis of knowing the sociopolitical genesis of a single identity label. The need for further ethnographic research is critical in order to flesh out and represent the diversity of these gay or *takatāpui* lives as they are currently lived, to better understand the relationship between English and *te Reo Māori* in everyday conversations, and to better understand the ways in which these are connected to wider social and political forces. For example, a number of linguists have identified "Māori Vernacular English," which is more a "style of English than an actual separate dialect" (Gordon and Deverson, 1998: 144). This "style" has a number of distinctive phonological, prosodic and syntactical features, one of which is regular code switch-

ing and lexico-semantic borrowing from Māori. The extract from Witi Ihimaera's novel and the insertion of *takatāpui* into primarily English discourse may be examples of this style. At the same time, I would suggest that while there may be other "sub-dialects" within Māori society, one of which could be oriented around the social practices of some homosexually identified Māori individuals, they cannot and should not be taken as proof of a singular, autonomous linguistic, socio-cultural or sexual identity, for to do so would oversimplify and reify the dense, layered and interrelated contexts of linguistic and cultural production and their varied outcomes.[19] This is the challenge for anthropology, which has for too long ignored sexuality as a valid domain of research and only recently recognized the cultural and political complexity of language and linguistic practices in relation to sexuality, indigenous peoples and their ongoing battles for social justice and respect.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1 Aotearoa is the Māori word for the nation of New Zealand. I will use these terms interchangeably throughout this paper.

2 The majority of informants consulted in this article are men who claim an exclusively "homosexual" orientation in their sexual and romantic practices, although a couple of comments from "transgender" individuals are also included. It is important to keep in mind that there are Māori men who have sex with men but do not necessarily view themselves as having a homosexual "identity" (see the New Zealand Aids Foundation "Male Call/*Waea Mai Tāne Mā*" Report 5, Sexual Identity, 1997 and Report 3, Māori Men who have sex with men, 1997 for further details; see also Epple, 1998 for a discussion of problems in applying Western sexual identity categories to Native American (Navajo) understandings of bodies and sexual practices which raises similar issues for Māori research). I will return to this point towards the end of this article.

3 In this paper I investigate this term primarily as it used amongst men; however, it should be noted that takatāpui and variations of this term are used by some Māori women's and transgender groups.

4 See Altman, 1997; Kapac, 1998 and Manalansan, IV: 1997 for similar analytical perspectives emphasizing historical and global contingencies in the development of gay Asian subjectivities.

5 Although I recognize the term "indigenous" is problematic in terms of referencing and defining a social group as it cloaks the process of colonial relations which have, through modernity, created the category of "indigenous" as opposed to "settlers" or "immigrants," I will continue to identify Māori as "indigenous" throughout this paper as it is a popular term of self-reference and other terms such as "ethnic" or "racial" would be equally problematic, if not more so. I attend to the sociolinguistic implications of this colonialist binary terminology below.

6 Thanks to Tom Boellstorff for this point.

7 See for example, Esther Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island*, 1993, or Stephen O. Murray, *American Gay*, 1996.

8 At least 65 Native American societies are recorded having these kinds of individuals according to Will Roscoe (1998).

9 "Pakeha" is a Māori word that describes New Zealanders of Anglo-European settler descent.

10 For example, Victoria University of Wellington's School of Māori Studies offering an undergraduate paper on Māori sexuality entitled, *Te Huinga Takatāpui*.

11 Lee Smith, a linguist in the Department of Māori Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, indicated to me that the term is not present in *Nga Moteatea*.

12 Thanks to Lee Smith for this translation.

13 Others told me that they had never heard of this word until recently, but these individuals tended to be primarily monolingual (English) with little experience/education in *te Reo*.

14 There are very few references to ethnic subdivisions within gay and lesbian communities in any of the gay media of this period.

15 "Culture" is not clearly defined in this text but appears to support an exclusivist, autochthonous application.

16 However only a small portion went to the MLC; the majority was spent on Māori television broadcasting (TPK, 1998: 25).

17 A meeting house belonging to members of an extended family or sub-clan of a tribe.

18 The researchers conducted a "logistic regression" in order to investigate the effect of demographic and social milieu variables on the likelihood of Māori men identifying as *takatāpui*, and found that Māori men who lived in cities were significantly more likely to identify as *takatāpui*, as were those attached to the gay community, defined in relation to membership in gay organizations, reading gay newspapers/magazines, and the respondent's own set of criteria through which he decided that he is part of the community (Aspin et al., 1997: 26).

19 This observation needs to be further researched in order to contribute to the debate over whether the existence of "gay language" is important or irrelevant (see Kulick, 2000): During my field work, I encountered no discussion of or reference to the possibility of a "gay" or *takatāpui* language amongst the Māori I knew nor did I note any structural morphological, grammatical, or phonological features indicative of a distinct language. What became evident was how English and *te Reo Māori* mutually influenced and structured the dynamics of linguistic practices of sexual (and other) subjectivities—instead of interrogating the possibility of a "gay" language I gradually realized I should investigate how sexual subjectivity was articulated through "a" language (associated with a minority "indigenous" identity) positioned in an unequal relationship to another language (associated with a majority "Anglo-settler" identity).

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Stridhanam: Rethinking Dowry, Inheritance and Women's Resistance among the Syrian Christians of Kerala

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Abstract: The property experiences of Syrian Christian women in Kerala, India, viewed in the contexts of their kinship positions (as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and widows) and spatial arrangements in natal, conjugal and affinal households, provide a more nuanced understanding of dowry and inheritance practices than the decontextulized generalizations offered by the dominant theoretical paradigms. Depending on their kinship positions, the mutuality of kinship with men, the diverging interests of natal, affinal and conjugal households, the relative strengths of patriarchal hegemony and counter-hegemony and the accessibility to the secular legal system, women respond to property disputes by acquiescing, accommodating, bargaining or overtly resisting. These experiences, while questioning some of the paradigmatic explanations of Indian dowry, add a new dimension to the growing literature on women's resistance and help establish a much needed linkage between the study of dowry and that of women's resistance.

Keywords: dowry, testamentary inheritance, intestate succession, kinship mutuality, patriarchal hegemony, bargaining, resistance

Résumé : L'expérience de posséder quelque chose chez les femmes chrétiennes syriennes de Kerala, en Inde, vue dans le contexte de leur position dans le système de parenté (comme fille, soeur, épouse, mère et veuve) et de l'arrangement de l'espace dans les résidences conjugales et affinales, offre une compréhension plus nuancée de la dot et des pratiques d'héritage que les généralisations décontextualisées proposées par le paradigme dominant. Dépendant de leur position dans le système de parenté, la correspondance des relations de parenté avec les hommes, des intérêts différents des maisonnées affinale et conjugale, de la force relative de l'hégémonie et de la contre-hégémonie patriarcale, et de l'accès au système légal, les femmes réagissent aux disputes de propriété en acquiesçant, s'accommodant, négociant ou résistant ouvertement. Ces expériences qui remettent en question quelques unes des explications paradigmatiques de la dot en Inde, ajoutent de nouvelles dimensions à la documentation existante sur la résistance des femmes et contribue à établir un lien qui manquait entre l'étude la dot et celle de la résistance des femmes.

Mots-clés : Dot, héritage par testament, succession sans testament, mutualité entre membres de la parenté, hégémonie patriarcale, négociations, résistance

On February 23, 1986, the Supreme Court of India struck down the Travancore Christian Succession Act, which stipulated that a daughter's share of her father's intestate property would be Rs. 5 000 ($165), or a quarter of the share given to her brother, whichever was less, and that she would lose her right even to this share if she had been given or promised *stridhanam*, or dowry, by her father. The Travancore Christian Succession Act had been in force since 1916, as the operative law of intestate succession among Syrian Christians, in Kerala, South India, notwithstanding legislative changes during the British rule in India and after India's independence in 1947.

The Supreme Court ruling was the culmination of a long legal battle launched by Mary Roy, a married and separated Syrian Christian woman, against her brother who had evicted her from their father's intestate property. Mary challenged the Travancore Succession Act on the grounds that it was unconstitutional and violated Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, which enshrines gender equality as a fundamental right. In the Supreme Court appeal, Mary Roy was joined by two co-petitioners, both Syrian Christian and unmarried single women, who were also battling their brothers against eviction from the intestate properties of their fathers. The Supreme Court held with the three petitioners, repealed the Travancore Christian Succession Act (TCSA), and replaced it by the Indian Succession Act (ISA) of 1925, which stipulates gender equality in intestate succession.

In this paper, I use the Mary Roy case as the backdrop for discussing dowry and inheritance practices among urban, middle-class Syrian Christian families in Trivandrum, the capital city of the Southern Indian state of Kerala. Specifically, I focus on women's rights and responses in three areas of property devolution, viz., intestate succession (inheritance of property without the owner's will), testamentary inheritance (inheritance based on the written will) and dowry prestations. The

data used in this paper was gathered from more than 100 households involving over 500 marriages, during my field research on the marriage and dowry practices of Kerala's Christian community. My field data including interviews of women and case studies of women in property disputes are representative of the experiences of Syrian Christian women in a variety of property situations. My purpose is to use these property experiences to revisit some of the well-established generalizations about dowry and inheritance in India.

Women's contestation of unequal inheritance and dowry practices is not a new phenomenon in Kerala or elsewhere in India. However, writings on Indian dowry are devoid of any perspective on women's responses to property inequities while the literature on resistance has failed to consider these responses as examples of women's resistance to gender discrimination and underlying cultural ideologies. It is also my purpose in this paper to use the property experience of Syrian Christian women to establish linkages between the study of dowry, on the one hand, and the study of women's resistance to property discrimination, on the other. It would seem that these two areas of study have developed in relative isolation in the literature on South Asia.

The dominant dowry paradigms (i.e., structural-functionalist, structuralist and cost-benefit interpretations of marriage prestations) suffer from two mutually reinforcing shortcomings, viz., the tendency towards de-contextualized generalization (see Comaroff, 1980) and the absence of a gender perspective that arises from a failure to include women's experiences and voices in regard to dowry and inheritance issues. Discourses on dowry have generally centred around the regulatory and functional aspects of dowry in the hypergamous, stratified South Asian societies: as "gift" for perpetuating alliance and affinity (Dumont, 1966 and 1983; Yalman, 1962); its role in determining status (Caplan, 1984; Goody, 1973 and 1990; Tambiah, 1989); and its compensatory role as payment for contracting an advantageous alliances for the bride's family (Spiro, 1975). Discussions on dowry have also been framed within, as well as critical of, the inheritance aspect of dowry. Thus dowry has been differentiated either as the "inheritance" of women (Goody, 1990; Goody and Tambiah, 1973), or as their "disinheritance" (Kishwar, 1986; Sharma, 1984).

Arguments about the assumed unity or the diversity of Indian kinship systems have also been phrased in terms of the mediating role of dowry and women's property in systems of kinship and marriage (Goody, 1990). Dumont (1966), downplays north/south differences in kinship systems in favour of conceptualizing affinity as a

general principle of Indian kinship. He regards dowry and continuous gift-giving (see also Vatuk, 1975) between kin and affines in North India as the functional equivalent of repetitive alliances through classificatory cross-cousin marriages in South India. Others such as Karve (1953, cited in Goody, 1990: 234) contrast the two systems on the basis of village exogamy, the low status of women, the absence of close-kin marriage and patrilineal inheritance in North India, as opposed to bilateral kinship, the endowment of land to women, classificatory cross-kin marriage and the higher status of women in South India.

My data on the Syrian Christians and my observations of other communities in Kerala, suggest a re-analysis of these arguments at four levels: property devolution, kinship systems, women's property experiences and the legal domain. At the level of devolution, the paradigmatic explanations of dowry and inheritance are useful but partial if considered in mutually exclusive and generalized terms. Dowry and inheritance among the Syrian Christians, as indeed among most South Asian communities, may be described as relating to each other along a continuum: at one end, dowry (immediate or delayed) and pre-mortem inheritance may converge as a single mode of devolution (see also McGilvray, 1973; Yalman 1967) or, women can be the sole inheritors as direct or residual heirs; at the other end, the two may diverge into distinct forms of devolution, with sons acquiring a larger inheritance compared to the dowries of daughters. A growing trend, among households trying to cope with inflated dowry demands, is to sacrifice the inheritance of sons in favour of dowries for daughters. The myriad ways in which women respond to practices of testation, dowry prestation and intestate inheritance, discourage a simplistic and generalized reading of dowry in dichotomous terms as inheritance or disinheritance.

At the level of kinship, the Syrian Christian patrilineal kinship system is at variance with anthropological generalizations about Indian kinship and the notion of a North-South dichotomy in kinship patterns and marriage systems. In fact, the South Indian Syrian Christian kinship and marriage systems are analogous to Northern Indian patterns, especially in regard to the prohibition of cross-cousin and close-kin marriages in adjacent generations. As well, the Syrian Christian marriage and inheritance practices differ from those of other Kerala communities, namely, the classificatory cross-cousin marriage and bilateral inheritance practices of the Latin Catholics (who are governed by the more liberal Indian Succession Act of 1925), as well as

the well-known matrilineal *Marumakatayam* inheritance practices of the Hindu Nairs and the Muslim *Mapillas*. As in most patrilineal Indian communities, however, women inherit as "residual heirs" since lineal inheritance is given precedence over collateral inheritance.

Generalizations about kinship, dowry and women's status have also led to the homogenizing of women's experiences, which in some ways parallel dominant, androcentric constructions and discourses about kinship systems, women's roles and women's nature in early anthropological studies (see Sacks, 1979). On the other hand, feminists' attempts to offer alternative perspectives to counter and lay bare male biases in theory and practice, have often been at the expense of exploring women's diversity and multiple experiences (Moore, 1988; Rhode, 1993). As Hawkesworth (1989: 545-546) has argued, the reliance of feminist theories (e.g., Mackinnon, 1993) on a "homogeneous women's experience" is contradictory to feminists' general acknowledgment of the historically, contextually and socially variable conceptualizations of knowledge. Such homogenizing and essentialist descriptions of women's nature, personality and spatial locations by women anthropologists (e.g., Chodorow, 1974; Ortner, 1974; Rosaldo, 1974) have provoked critical responses from women of color (Abu Lughod, 1993; Davis, 1983; Moore, 1988), and from Indian feminists who have attempted to chart their own path, independent of feminist theorizing in the West (Agnew, 1997; Mohanty, 1997).

Writing on the Tamil Hindu women of South India, Kapadia (1995) describes the different ways in which Tamil Brahmin and non-Brahmin women experience the discourses and practices of kinship and marriage. Kapadia argues that while women of all castes are inferior to males in their families and operate under restrictive patriarchal ideologies, the bilateral basis of non-Brahmin kinship, the cross-kin marriage system and the emphasis on matrilateral ties, have historically contributed to the relatively higher status of women of the non-Brahmin castes compared to their Brahmin counterparts. Social and economic changes, however, are weakening traditional bonds of kinship, leading to the emergence of a "hidden" discourse among women on the negative aspects of kinship that counters in many ways the dominant male discourse that defines kinship as "isogamous." The relevance of Kapadia's study to my arguments is in her emphasis on the varying experiences of different groups of women and how their responses to gender inequities are shaped by their class, caste and kinship positioning. In a similar vein, Raheja

(1994: 50) describes the oral traditions of rural, North-Indian women in responding as daughters, sisters, wives and daughters-in-law to the dominant discourses and institutions of patrilineal kinship. Menon's (1996) study of the matrilineal Nayars of Kerala questions the merits of generalizing about the high status of women in matrilineal kinship systems, in the light of women's kinship experiences that vary across the contours of class and educational and occupational statuses. These studies are breaking new ground by eliciting the multiple voices, experiences and understandings of Indian women about kinship and marriage and their own positions within them, and challenging the dominant, male, upper caste and class constructions of kinship, marriage and women's status and the theoretical paradigms that are predicated on these constructions.

In dealing with women's experiences, I suggest a multiple dis-aggregation of women both in terms of their individual situations as daughters, sisters, wives and widows, and their spatial and kinship contexts of natal, conjugal and affinal families. As with critical feminist perspectives within feminist legal discourses (e.g., Kapur, 1992; Resnik, 1996; Rhode, 1993), and anthropological critiques of rule-centred paradigms on marriage payments (e.g., Comaroff 1980), I argue that the treatment and understanding of dowry and inheritance practices would be better served through an experiential analysis of women in their individual situations and property contexts, than by textual exegesis of traditional rules and sacred precepts that have been the main sources relied on by some of the advocates of the dominant dowry paradigms (e.g., Tambiah, 1989; Trautmann, 1981).

Women's responses in property situations include a range of strategies, from accommodation, acquiescence and compromise, to bargaining with kin, "everyday forms of resistance" (Scott, 1977 and 1985), "occasional resistance" (Moore, 1993) and/or to outright litigation. The cases I describe in this paper, add to Indian and cross-cultural studies on women's resistance that have examined the counter-culture of female resistance involving simple acts of subversion (Agarwal, 1994a; Hart, 1991; Menon, 1996), culturally legitimate expressive traditions (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Raheja, 1994), as well as the more ingenious strategies that subvert and oppose male scripts of power, dominance and women's place (O'Hanlon, 1992; Oldenburg, 1991; Ong, 1988; Sen, 1990b). These studies have also shown that the issues of power, hegemony and consciousness are better informed by considering situations of resistance as "diagnostics of power" (Abu Lughod, 1990; Ong, 1988). As I have already

noted, resistance studies in South Asia have not included dowry and inheritance contexts as sites of women's resistance to gender discrimination and kinship patriarchy.

At the legal level, a number of laws enacted both during the British rule and after independence have created a legal climate that is favourable to women's rights. But the exercise of these rights are severely constrained by several factors. The weight of patriarchal traditions are such that the legal recognitions of women's rights do not carry a great deal of social legitimacy (Agarwal, 1994b; Papanek, 1990) and are, therefore, considerably weakened in their application. A corollary of the lack of social legitimacy is the inherent gender bias against women in the judicial system for, as Jethmalani (1995: 19), a well known Indian lawyer and feminist, has noted, "law is constrained by law itself, it has no meaning without interpretation. Law is assumed to be neutral and rational but invariably interpreted and written by men." Both Jethmalani (ibid) and Kumar (1993) have commented on the biases against women that are evident in the rulings of India's courts, especially in the dowry death cases that are brought before them. For these reasons, legal feminists have raised the issue of a feminist jurisprudence, because law, as a privileged, male discourse, is oblivious to the disjunction between law and the realities of women's experiences (see Griffiths, 1997; Mackinnon 1989; Rhode, 1993; Smith 1993). The rural women in the North Indian state of Rajasthan, distrustful of the legal forums that privilege males and the upper classes, seek alternative dispute solving mechanisms through the village *mullah*, the Muslim priest (Moore, 1993).

The burden of religious or customary personal laws also weighs heavily against the realization of equal rights provided by the secular laws, especially in the case of women belonging to minority religious groups. A good example of this anomaly is the case of Shahbano, a Muslim woman in the South Indian state of Andra Pradesh, who challenged her wealthy lawyer husband for continued maintenance even after *iddat* (the three-month period stipulated by Muslim personal law, during which a divorcing husband is obligated to support his divorced wife). In April 1985, one year before the ruling in the Mary Roy case, the Indian Supreme Court ruled in favour of Shahbano, but the ruling triggered strong protests by Muslim clerics and political leaders and the Indian government went so far as to amend the constitution and pass the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights in Divorce) Act to override the Supreme Court ruling (for details of the Shahbano case, see Awn, 1994; Pathak and Sunder Rajan, 1989).

It should be noted that equal inheritance rights in law are limited to intestate inheritance and are not applicable to testamentary succession. The latter is entirely left to the discretion and good will of family members. The Dowry Prohibition Act enacted in 1961 by India's central Parliament has not reduced its practice among the Syrian Christians and other Indian communities. In a sense, the legal prohibition of dowry amounts to a refutation of the religious and customary textual validation of dowry that the dominant dowry paradigms have relied on. However, by making dowry transactions illegal, the Dowry Prohibition Act has unintentionally removed the traditional safeguards that were available to women, such as the public announcement of dowry and the custom that allowed women to reclaim their dowries from their affines in the case of divorce or widowhood. Furthermore, the prohibition of dowry without providing for gender equality in property inheritance, has left little choice for the Syrian Christian women except to rely on dowry as the only mode of property inheritance.

In developing a framework to examine women's responses to property situations, I have drawn from a number of theoretical sources. Households as sites of property devolution and dowry transactions seldom operate according to the premises of formal economic models that presuppose the operation of altruistic, voluntary and optimal transactions within households (Folbre and Hartmann, 1988). Recent household models have developed analytical concepts such as "co-operative conflicts" (Sen, 1990a), "patriarchal bargaining" (Kandyoti, 1997) and women's "fall-back position" (Agarwal, 1994b), as tools to study gender disputes over resource allocations and entitlements within households. Amartya Sen (1990a) considers household interactions as involving both co-operation and conflicts, in which household members benefit equally, or some more so than others. Women's responses in conflict situations can also be identified as "patriarchal bargaining" occurring under conditions of "classic patriarchy": women bargain with male kin by exerting "all the pressure they can muster to make men live up to their obligations in exchange for submissiveness and propriety" (Kandyoti, 1997: 472). But patriarchal bargaining, as the term suggests, is unequal bargaining, with women invariably being the weaker partners in the bargaining process, partly because women often lack independent resources or the legal and community support that would strengthen their "fall-back position" in situations of conflict. Their weakness may also be attributed to what both Sen (1990a) and Agarwal (1994a) describe as the emotional dimension of gender relations within households and the paradoxical position of women who are caught

between their endearment to kin and the pursuit of individual well-being. For their part, the Syrian Christian women speak of the tension in property situations emerging from their "moral dilemma" of having to choose between gender equality and kinship obligations, because the ideological burden of preserving the moral requisites of family unity rests heavily, if not solely, on the shoulders of women.

The Gramscian notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony (Femia, 1975) are also instructive in understanding women's experiences of and responses to property situations, especially when, at one extreme, women play accommodating roles within the patriarchal system including their commitment to or acquiescence with gender discriminatory practices, while, at the other extreme, they are prepared to challenge the system and claim equal property rights. As Comaroff (1994) suggests, dominant ideologies may disappear into the domain of hegemony, becoming the common sense, naturalized and often invisible elements of a shared world view. Women often express and acquiesce with the hegemonic world view, which includes kinship norms and gender role expectations and operate as the agents of patriarchy in property situations and in gender socialization. Women's acquiescence with or accommodation of male privileges and restrictive gender and kinship practices cannot be dismissed as "false consciousness" (pace Scott, 1985). However, a mystification of consciousness (Kapadia, 1995) may operate through the "education of consent" (Woost, 1993: 503), which might explain the influence of ideology on women's acceptance of property inequities.

The hegemony of kinship and the socialization of women into traditional gender role expectations notwithstanding, women may rethink their way out of the commonsense and shared world views (Lazarus-Black and Hirsch, 1994) by transcending and challenging the established norms of kinship and gender-role expectations. Women's acquiescence with limiting social practices or their resistance to it must be read as hegemonic and counter-hegemonic processes involving "contradictory series of struggles to reshuffle the inventory of common sense, the sedimented body of knowledge and beliefs about the world and how to act in it" (Woost, 1993). Also, as Amartya Sen (1990: 126) reminds us, we must not take the absence of protests and questioning of inequality by women as evidence of equality; nor should we use them, as Agarwal (1994a) points out, as evidence of women's lack of questioning or perception of inequality. More to the point, women "strategize within a set of concrete constraints" (Kandiyoti, 1997: 86). In the social and kinship context of the Syrian Christian universe, these constraints emerge from restrictive kinship and gender ideologies, conflicts between customary laws and secular laws, and the tensions between kinship obligations and property demands involving natal, affinal and conjugal families.

I use the term "kinship mutuality" to describe the state of kinship between cross-sex siblings and between women and their natal and affinal families, and suggest that the state of kinship mutuality is a critical determinant of women's responses in property situations. Property mediates ties of kinship inasmuch as kinship mediates property claims, a point that also emerges from cross-cultural studies on marriage payments. Jack Goody (1990: 271) explains the brother-sister relationship in terms of property claims to land as dowry, or inheritance, and asserts that a woman's relinquishment of her rights to property opens up claims to assistance in other ways. Among the Kandyan Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, according to Yalman (1967), a sister's unclaimed inheritance/dowry gives her the right to make claims on her brothers, while in Bangladesh (Kabeer 1994: 141), even women with independent entitlements "prefer to realize them in ways that do not disrupt kin-ascribed entitlements." Parallel practices in some African communities is the cattle-linked brother-and-sister complex based on bridewealth claims. Among the Tamil, non-Brahmin castes of Southern India, the cross-sex sibling tie is expressed through continuous gift-giving and the obligations of brothers to their sisters and sisters' children and through the marriages of their children (Kapadia, 1995). Non-Brahmin Tamil women seldom make legal claims for property against the interests of their brothers unless the brothers defaulted on their obligations to provide "sir" (gifts) to their sisters' daughters during ritual ceremonies marking life-cycle stages. These gifts are considered to compensate for the inheritance forfeited by sisters in favour of their brothers (ibid.: 22-23).

While the demands of kinship mutuality among the Syrian Christians are traditionally defined both in reciprocal and normative terms as obligations between kin and by the sentimentality of cross-sex sibling ties (affection, loyalty), there are signs that these moral safeguards for women are eroding. Natal families, particularly brothers who have overextended themselves financially to provide inflated dowry payments for their sisters, are reluctant to provide further support. The individualism of modern nuclear families, and conflicting property interests among conjugal, natal and affinal families are further reasons leading to the decline in sibling support.

At a comparative level, Deniz Kandiyoti's (1997) perceptive study of African women's strategies for keeping

men in tune with their kinship obligations, facilitates an understanding of the state of kinship circumstances in which women's expectations of assistance are not honored by male kin, leading women to openly resist them by maximizing strategies that reinforce their autonomy or to make claims against defaulting men. Griffiths's (1997) study of marriage and law in Botswana focusses on the changing context of male and female marital negotiations and women's ability to overcome the normal constraints of their gendered world to challenge, negotiate with, or take legal actions against males. Her study describes how women's options are severely limited by their lack of access to resources which is often mediated by the familial and social networks to which they belong. Women's position within these networks and their status as wives, mothers and unmarried women, determine the basis for their claims over male kin and their appeal to legal forums beyond the domestic sphere. My thesis, based on the experiences of Syrian Christian women, is that women acquiesce, accommodate or bargain with kin, invoke other subtle forms of resistance, or transcend the more conventional forms of resistance through outright legal challenges depending on a number of familial and societal factors: the mutuality of kinship between women and men; their conflicting loyalties to and the diverging interests of the conjugal, natal and affinal families; their access to the secular legal system that protects gender equality; the influence of customary laws and practices that are in disjunction with the gender-neutral secular laws; and the social, material and kinship constraints faced by women in taking legal action against property injustices.

The Kinship Context: Sites of Power and Change

Kerala's Christian community (about 20% of the state population of over 25 million) is broadly divided into Syrians and non-Syrians, defined primarily by the different sources and timing of proselytization. Among the Syrian Christians, the Northists trace their origin to the high caste (Brahmin and Nair) converts of the 1st century AD, while the Southists (also called the *Kananayites*) claim to be descendants of 4th-century Syrian immigrants. The two groups are largely endogamous. The non-Syrians are the descendants of Christian converts during the post-15th-century colonial period, belonging mostly to non-Brahmin and non-Nair castes. The largest among them are the *Latinkar* (Latin Catholics), who belong to diverse endogamous caste groups, and whose ancestors were converted by the Portuguese missionaries in the 15th and 16th centuries. Both the Syrian and non-Syrian groups are divided into Catholic and Protestant sects and denom-

inations. While marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics as well as between the Syrians and non-Syrians are strongly discouraged, interdenominational marriages within each of the Syrian groupings are common. Non-Syrian groups, on the other hand, are known to contract intercaste alliances but within their own sects (Catholic and Protestants).

The Syrian Christian kinship universe may be described as a "structural system of male dominance" (Omvedt, 1986: 30), that exhibits certain features of "classic patriarchy" such as patrilineal descent and inheritance, the incorporation of women into their affinal families, male control over property and patrilineal joint or extended family living (Kandyoti,1997). While the traditional extended family arrangements, has largely disintegrated into smaller nuclear family arrangements in the context of urbanization and rural-urban migration, the extended family system of spatially separate but linked families of siblings and parents, continues to be the site where property is devolved and disputes emerge. In most cases, domestic, marital and property matters continue to function under the control of the *giriha nayakan* or patriarch (Visvanathan 1989: 1344) of the larger *kudumpam* (family), who also decides on the allocation of dowries to out-marrying daughters and grand daughters and the disposal of the dowries of in-marrying daughters-in-law.

The Syrian Christian system of descent and property devolution is supported by core cultural values and ideologies that are upheld and reinforced at several levels within the Syrian Christian social universe, levels that also inform the sites of patriarchal power and kinship hegemony: family and kinship; customary, or, religious laws, and legal institutions; and the Christian church and community. Women and men are socialized into emphasizing "the sanctity and unity of the Christian family," and accepting male control over property and the mutuality of kinship, which essentially means that women forfeit property claims in return for security, support and protection by men. "A woman must not claim" is a constant refrain among Syrian Christians, and it succinctly conveys the strong convention against women making property claims. The relative contributions of sons and daughters to the families are phrased in terms of kinship and affinity: "sons carry the family name," whereas "daughters join their husbands' families"; "daughters are given a dowry," while "sons receive dowries"; and "sons contribute to family income and ensure parents' security." Ideologically, a more effective strategy is to create the notion of and appeal to women's greater moral good, their sense of fairness and justice, a socializing strategy that Papanek (1990) calls "compensatory justification."

The social reproduction of kinship and community is achieved through arranged marriages within the endogamous boundaries of caste, class, status and the Christian sects. Individual marital choices, which Christians refer to as "love marriages," are strongly disapproved of, and marriages are arranged through parental mediation with dowries given and demanded according to the wealth and status of families, and the individual merits (education, employment, income, and, in the case of women, physical appearance) of prospective partners. In the absence of close-kin marriages, as found among other South Indian communities, Syrian Christians seldom use the institution of marriage to consolidate property within kinship units, although preserving ancestral property within the family is the most common reason given for excluding daughters from inheriting family lands/houses. However, as in most south Asian communities, marriage and cash dowries are strategically used for establishing alliances within the Syrian middle class and for seeking marital connections within or between status groups and marriage circles.

The devolution of property among Syrian Christians, parallels the dual aspects of kinship and marriage, with inheritance passing along the male descent line and dowry in the form of cash, jewelry and household items passing at marriage to the female. The male line provides the conduit for transmitting land, the *veedu peyer* (house or lineage name), descent and denominational affiliation. The practice of ultimogeniture places the family home and the care of parents in the hands of the youngest son, but there are no fixed rules for dividing property among the sons, which might be based on factors such as available property, sons' financial needs, their fulfilment of family obligations, the father's goodwill and the dowries brought in by their wives. This system of patrilineal inheritance co-exists with a system that recognizes, in the absence of male heirs, women as "residual heirs," leading to what Goody (1990) and Tambiah (1989) have described as "bilateral tendencies" within patrilineal systems. The alternative to recognizing a daughter as a residual heir is to adopt her husband as the son. They Syrian Christians call the "adopted son" (-in-law) *dattuputran*, and this practice has also been observed among other patrilineal South Asian communities (e.g. see Yalman, 1967, on the Kandyan Sinhalese in Sri Lanka). In the joint-family household arrangements of the past, dowries were merged with the inheritance of their husbands, paralleling women's incorporation into husbands' households. The merging of dowry and inheritance and its control by male affines continues today in spite of nuclear family residential arrangements. The incorporation of women is symbolically expressed through the wife's appropriation of the family name, denomination and lineage identity of the husband, but incorporation does not imply the severance of the daughter's ties to her natal family. On the contrary, the expectation among Syrian Christians is that a married woman can continue to rely on her natal family for material and emotional support.

The dowry given is "never intended as a gift in any absolute sense" (see Goody, 1990: 169, pace Dumont, 1983 and Trautmann, 1981), but must be returned by the affinal kin to the conjugal home in the form of inheritance given to the son. For the most part, the control of dowry is in male hands, in the hands of the patriarch in an affinal household, and under the husband in the conjugal household. However, as Visvanathan (1989: 1341) has observed, the "staking of conjugal rights and privileges" among the Syrian Christians, is a function of inheritance and dowry prestation. Inheritance not claimed by women from their natal families, or the retention of dowry by their affinal kin, provides women with the right to claim maintenance, respect and emotional and material support from their natal and affinal families. The rights and protection that women enjoy are closely tied to the norms of kinship mutuality, with dowry being an instrument that guarantees the rights associated with such norms. While they have traditionally been informal and unwritten, customary norms have been as effective as legal ones, because they were backed by the community and upheld through informal sanctions.

As in other parts of India, the Dowry Prohibition Act has not been effective in curbing dowry giving among the Syrian Christians. The Syrian Christians use a loophole in the law that allows the transfer of family wealth to daughters as "gifts" or "inheritance," to continue with the practice of dowry, calling the transaction, the daughter's "share" instead of the customary term, "*stridhanam.*" A traditional safeguard under a patrilineal and patrilocal system of kinship, was the wife's right to the return of the *stridhanam* (dowry) at divorce or the death of her spouse. If the wife died, her dowry would devolve on her children and her husband would be the "vehicle" for the transmission of her dowry to their children. There were also formal rituals such as the *orappa* (announcing and witnessing of the dowry) ceremony and the recording of dowry in the church register, both of which operated as testimony to the transactions that took place. The Christian churches also encouraged dowry giving as they were entitled to a percentage of the dowry. After the Dowry Prohibition Act, dowry is no longer recorded in the church register, and the *orappa* ceremony has become a mere formality for the announcement of marriages. The

exchange of dowry now takes place in private and in violation of the law. This has made women, particularly widows and divorcees, vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by male affines who can now use and dispose of the dowry at their whim. Women are thrown into a legal dead end as they cannot legally claim what is transmitted on their behalf illegally.

In the past, a son's inheritance was measured against the dowry of his wife, while the dowry negotiated for a daughter was predicated on the potential suitor's wealth. Both were part of the process of "status matching," and strict conventions regulated the fixing of dowry amounts among status equals who formed specific marriage circles. These marriage circles are formed by families belonging to named *veedus*, or houses, which operate as status bearing patrilineages. Individual *kudumpams*, or families, are identified by their *veedu peyer*, or "house names" and are classified as "good family" (*nalla kudumpam*), "old family" (*pazhaya kudumpam*), "well-known family," "new rich family" (*puthupanakkara kudumpam*) and so on. "Status matching" has acquired new dimensions in the modern marriage and labour markets, as education, occupation, income and connections to individuals/families in high status positions have come to define the accomplishments of individuals and the collective achievements of nuclear families within the broader extended family grouping. The matching of the bride's dowry and groom's inheritance has given way to the matching of the dowry to the professional/occupational status of a potential groom. This has tended to shift the burden of wealth as a requirement of marriage shared by both families in the past, to primarily the bride's family who now has to provide a substantial dowry regardless of the employment status and earning capacity of the bride.

Compared to many other parts of India, Kerala's women have a high rate of literacy (averaging over 70% for females compared to 80% for males) and high educational and employment achievements. But women's education, employment and contributions to family income are seldom given consideration in dowry assessments. Professionally qualified Syrian Christian women end up paying high dowries to acquire grooms having similar or higher qualifications, a situation that calls into question the compensatory function of dowry as payment for an "economically burdensome woman" (e.g., Boserup, 1970; Divale and Harris, 1976). The dowry as compensation argument is essentially flawed as it obfuscates the actual contributions of women as opposed to "perceived contributions," i.e., social perceptions about women's contributions (Papanek, 1990). The competition for educated spouses has also created what Billig (1972) has called the

"marriage squeeze," to describe the shortage of potential spouses with matching qualifications in the compatible age groups of men and women (see also Gaulin and Boster, 1990). This adds to the already disadvantaged position of educated Syrian Christian women, who find it more difficult to consider marrying less educated men with or without dowry. In contrast, women without higher education but having property to be given as dowry can and do find men with higher education and professional employment.

Kerala sends the largest proportion of Indians to work in the oil-rich Middle East, and the earnings of Middle East migrants have contributed to the raising of dowry levels in the state. For the *puthupanakkarar* (the new rich and so called on account of their Middle East earnings) among the Christians, dowry is the instrument through which they convert their new found wealth into socially desirable connections or intercaste marriages. Although cross-caste marriages within the Syrian Christian middle class are not common, when they do occur they usually involve the transaction of large amounts of dowry. Additionally, for many young professionals, receiving large dowries is important because dowry provides them the means to acquire the goods and services befitting the lifestyle of established professional families.

Dowry demands are often met from natal family wealth, including the earnings of male members of the natal household and the dowries received by sons/brothers. The demand for scarce urban land as dowry has resulted in the premium pricing of urban land. Families meet these demands by converting patrimonial, non-urban properties into cash and/or urban property. The competitive market for grooms and dowries creates a vicious circle with families demanding dowries for sons and using them as dowries for daughters. The use of dowry in this way operates in ways reminiscent of bridewealth in African societies, as a "circulating pool of resources" between households (Goody, 1973). Additionally, the control and use of dowry by affines transforms the dowry into a marriage payment, a situation that has led to controversial views (Billig, 1992; Caplan, 1984) on the actual direction and destination of dowry as well as the correct term (i.e., groom-price, groom-wealth) to be used to describe the transformed role of the dowry.

These developments have undermined the inheritance of sons in many cases, making some men to be more self-centred and protective of their conjugal interests at the expense of their kinship obligations and continued generosity to their married sisters (see Kapadia, 1995 for similar situations in Tamil Nadu). While Goody (1990: 225) explains the close bonds between cross-sex siblings in

India as replacing the shrinking of wider lineage ties in situations of urbanization and migration, the same circumstances also undermine cross-sex sibling ties. While urbanization is not a new phenomenon in Kerala, urbanization and the scarcity of urban land combine with such factors as the individualization of property interests and the diverging interests of natal, affinal and conjugal households, to weaken the mutuality of kinship between cross-sex siblings and the continued support of married sisters/daughters by their male kin in the natal family. Kinship mutuality and post-marital support have been the traditional compensatory mechanisms justifying women's exclusion from equal family inheritance.

The Legal Universe: Intestate Succession and Women's Resistance

Mary Roy's natal family is generally known in the community as a wealthy and well-established family of Northist Christians with a turbulent marital history. Mary is the eldest in her family of three, followed by a brother and a sister. Her parents were known to have separated after many years of marriage. Mary's "love marriage," without parental mediation and dowry, to a Bengali Hindu Brahmin, also ended in separation after two children. Mary's brother, a Rhodes scholar in Oxford, and later a pickle manufacturer, married a woman working in his factory after his first marriage to a European woman had ended in divorce. In later years, amidst the court battles between Mary and her brother, it was also public knowledge that the marriages of Mary's two children were in difficulties. Those among my informants who took the established line regarding family, kinship and property among Syrian Christians, viewed Mary's property dispute with her brother as inevitable given the family history of unconventional and unstable marriages.

After her separation, Mary took to teaching and moved with her children to Ooty, a pleasant holiday town in the Ghats mountains of the neighboring Tamil Nadu state. She chose Ooty so that she could live in the cottage that her father owned there. When the father died intestate, Mary's brother moved to evict her from the property. Her brother's lack of empathy soured their relationship and forced her to take legal action against her brother in the courts in Tamil Nadu, where the property was located and where she could claim redress under the Indian Succession Act of 1925 that stipulated equal sharing in intestate succession. The Tamil Nadu Courts thought otherwise and held that as a Syrian Christian she should seek redress in Kerala. Mary returned to Kerala and eventually became the Principal of a Girls' school in Kottayam, in central Kerala. She continued her legal bat-

tle with her brother in Kerala, but the Kerala Courts went along with the prevailing case law (following the 1957 ruling in Kurian Augusty vs Devassy Alley, cited in Gangrade, 1978) that the Indian Succession Act should not interfere with the customary laws of Syrian Christians. Mary appealed to the Supreme Court of India, and she was joined by two unmarried Syrian Christian women, Aleykutty and Mariakutty, as co-petitioners.

At the time of the appeal, Aleykutty was 60 years old, unmarried, and a retired nurse. The oldest of five sisters and one brother, she had been the main supporter of the family, including her widowed mother. Two of the five sisters had joined the convent, the youngest was a victim of polio, and their only married sister and her child had been deserted by her husband. The dispute began when Papachan, Alleykutty's only brother, assumed control of the 15 acres of the family land left intestate by their father. Even under the Travancore Christian Succession Act (1916), Papachan's mother, Aley Chako, and his unmarried sisters were entitled to limited rights in the estate as widowed and unmarried dependents. The mother was also entitled to an additional portion of the land which she had brought as dowry at her marriage. Another portion of the land had been promised, as dowry, to Mariamma, the only married sister. But regardless of their customary rights and his obligations to them as a son and brother, Papachan evicted his widowed mother and his unmarried sisters from their ancestral property.

The second co-petitioner, Mariakutty was 65, also unmarried, and a retired teacher. Her father had died intestate in 1956 and her mother passed away in 1973. Until 1982, she had lived in the extended family home with her brothers, contributing to the family income from her earnings as a teacher. In 1982, her youngest brother, after his marriage, attempted to "buy her off" by offering her the Rs. 5 000 that she was entitled to as an unmarried woman under the Travancore Act. Mariakutty rejected the offer and left home. Using her savings and a bank loan, she bought land, built a house and lived by cultivating the land.

Two matters were argued before the Supreme Court on behalf of the three petitioners: (1) whether the Travancore Christian Succession Act (TCSA) of 1916, or the Indian Succession Act (ISA) of 1925, was the governing law for intestate succession among Kerala's Syrian Christians; and (2) if the gender-discriminatory provisions under the TCSA should be declared unconstitutional and void as they violated the constitutional guarantee of equal rights for the sexes. On February 23, 1986, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the petitioners, and declared the 1925 ISA Act to be the governing law of succession among

Syrian Christians with retrospective effect from 1951, the year when the Indian Parliament enacted legislation to enable the replacement of a family of local laws, such as the TCSA, by corresponding national laws (All India Reporter, 1986). The Supreme Court also bypassed the gender issue, arguing that it was "unnecessary to consider" the unconstitutionality of the gender provisions in the TCSA as the law stood to be repealed.

After the Supreme Court ruling, an elated Mary Roy called the judgment "a vital step forward for women," claiming that she would no longer wear that "shameful price-tag of Rs. 5 000 (which) I had worn in my mind for 25 years" (Arawamudan, 1986: 4). Mary also insisted that she "had not fought for the money...but because she could not stomach the injustice..." (Pillai, 1986: 78). For Mary Roy, it had been a lone battle against her brother, who had the support of their mother and sister and even Mary's own son. One year after the Supreme Court ruling, Mary publicly vented her feelings in an interview with one of India's popular women's magazines in English, *Manushi* (1987: 45-46):

> My son has been wooed by them with a rented house, a telephone, a car and a well-paid job in their factory. My son? He has much to gain. He feels rather cheated in not being treated like other males in the community. Therefore, he was quite happy to receive the largesse offered by my brother. I have celebrated one year since I have spoken to any of them. This is the price I have to pay for defying social customs. The family is backed by the bishops and the community. I would have been hounded out of this town except for the fact that I run an excellent school.

Mary's brother, George, dismissed the argument that Syrian women were denied equal rights by their families and Mary's own claim for a share of ancestral property. He argued that the Supreme Court ruling was based on the principle of gender equality but had no relation to the specifics of Mary's individual case. When Mary's personal case was heard in the District Court of Kerala after the Supreme Court ruling, George proceeded to inform the Court of the generous share Mary had received from the family's ancestral property. The District Court rejected Mary's argument that this property was a gift and not an inheritance (Menon, 1997).

The other women in this case faced similar reactions from their families. When Aleykutty filed action against her brother, he threatened Aleykutty, her mother and her sisters with physical violence and the women had to seek police protection. He also produced a will after the Supreme Court ruling which left him and his children the sole owners of the property. Aleykutty contested the will on the grounds that it was false as their father was paralyzed at the time of its alleged writing. Aley Chako, Aleykutty's mother, wrote to her son after his betrayal of the women of his family and her sorrowful letter was later published in *Manushi* (1987: 46), and I quote from it:

> We did not live happily after your father's death. For you, my son, my only son, seized his entire property and turned us out of the ancestral home. You decreed that neither I nor your sisters could live there no longer. My shame knew no boundaries. For want of any other remedy, my five daughters and I petitioned the Supreme Court. Now we are all heirs, my five daughters and I, and you, Papachan, are rightful heir only to 2/18th of the share of your father's property. For, according to the Indian Succession Act, I your mother will inherit one-third of the property and the remainder will be divided equally among sons and daughters.

In the case of Mariakutty, her brothers hurriedly attempted to divide the land among themselves and one of the brothers forged a will which was later rejected by the Court (Agarwal, 1994b: 225, footnote 62). Mariakutty obtained a Lower Court stay order, and after the Supreme Court ruling she went to the Trivandrum Legal Aid Council to help her obtain her share of the property. At the request of the Council, Mariakutty met with her brothers in the presence of a retired judge to resolve their dispute through mediation. After discussing with the parties, the judge advised Mariakutty (*Femina*, 1987: 89):

> You have become a heroine among the women of Travancore and Cochin, and you must be prepared to make a tyagam (sacrifice). For instance, you must forget (a) the cost of trees which are valued at Rs. 700 000, and have now been cut down and sold; (b) the cost of the ancestral house which has been demolished; and (c) the cost of immovables which are traditionally the share of the ladies but which no longer exist.

When Mariakutty refused to accept the proposed settlement (Rs. 150 000 for her and Rs. 600 000 worth of property for the brothers), the judge observed "some women are tougher than men." Rather than persuading the brothers to follow the Supreme Court ruling, the mediating judge was delivering a patronizing lecture to the victim to play the "compensatory" role of the heroine and demonstrate the "compulsory" emotion of *tyagam* (sacrifice), thus appealing to what Goody (1990) describes as "moral considerations" or the greater moral burden of women. Failing to reach an agreement with her brothers,

Mariakutty defiantly proceeded to cordon off a section of the intestate rubber estate, constructed a shelter and began tapping rubber. By so doing she secured protection against eviction under the occupancy laws of Kerala (see Agarwal, 1994b).

For Syrian Christian women and men, the Mary Roy case was a litmus test that divided them for and against the principal petitioner. Mary Roy did not have the sympathy or overwhelming support among the Syrian Christian women and even those who spoke out in favour of equal inheritance rights were strongly critical of her methods—that of drawing her family to courts and flouting existing social norms against women making property claims against their families. Others reiterated the ideals of family unity and stable kinship, and women's role in preserving both. As property claims by women would tantamount to "getting out of the family," in the words of one informant, social convention dictated that "a woman must not claim" against the interests of male siblings. One of my key female informants, a distant relative of Mary Roy, disagreed with the court ruling, and was critical of Mary's litigation against her brother. She was unapologetic in her views and explained her position thus:

> Since sons carry the family name they must be given more, and daughters lose their right to additional "share" of the family property once they have been dowered. We Christians have certain traditions which have to be maintained, since they keep families together. When you go against these traditions, there will be problems. For instance, Mary's parents were separated. When there is such trouble in the family, the children will tend to go their separate ways. Mary is considered to be a strong woman, but very efficient. Her school is supposed to be the best girls' school in Kerala. Yet she is instilling the same qualities of independence in her students. Many of the students are the children of divorced or separated parents. Mary has sympathy for them.

Like my informant, Mary Roy's other detractors also traced the reason for the dispute to the family's chronic history of breaking with community traditions, its unconventional and broken marriages, and Mary's own "love marriage" and separation. Mary's court action was considered yet another example of her reckless disregard for social conventions. Mary's critics took her brother to task as well, for reneging on his responsibility as brother to be sympathetic to the needs of his sister. While many conceded that Mary's brother too had destroyed the tradition of kinship mutuality, not all of them would countenance Mary's overt resistance, insisting instead on the importance of upholding male privileges in property and the gender-role expectations of women.

Several other Christian women openly supported Mary Roy and welcomed the changes in the law of succession while being frankly critical of the devolutionary practices of their own natal and affinal families. They saw equal inheritance for women as a solution to the vexed issue of the dowry system since affinal families negotiate the maximum dowry knowing full well that women would not be entitled to further shares of the family property. Women's counter-hegemonic responses against the hegemony of kinship and property norms and practices are also influenced by the general climate of gender awareness raised by such issues as dowry deaths and gender violence that continue to be the battle grounds of the Indian and Kerala women's movements. At the same time, even women who are dissatisfied with the form and content of their dowries, or with the inheritance practices of their own natal families, spoke of being caught in what they described as the "moral dilemma" of having to choose between equal property rights and their obligations and loyalty to their families.

When Mary was appealing to the Supreme Court, she wrote to other women to join her in her litigation, but as she later recalled: "the response was tremendous...(but) almost everyone backed out because of pressure from the male members of their family" (Pillai, 1986: 78). Despite the relative prosperity of many Syrian Christian families, women often lack the independent resources necessary to take legal action against their kin. Mary too spoke of material constraints and the lack of kin support as two reasons that prevent women from pursuing their claims in court. A year after the Supreme Court ruling and in marked contrast to her initial jubilant reaction to the ruling, Mary had no illusions about the community's general sentiments, which she described to me in these words:

> On the whole, the community was against me, including women. They dismissed my battles for equality as the work of a crazy lady who married a Bengali Hindu. The Supreme Court ruling is a victory for women in a limited sense. It has made men wiser about writing wills, as the court ruling relates to intestate succession only. Not all women will take up the challenge. A woman must have the financial capacity, personality and the support of her husband. I know of only ten cases relating to intestate succession that have come up after the Supreme Court ruling. The idea that thousands of cases exist is exaggerated. The Christian church has done nothing for women but merely subjugated them with the idea of marriage being a sacrament and so on.

The Syrian churches have been the institutional bulwark of the Syrian marriage customs and the system of property transmission. Until the Supreme Court ruling in the Mary Roy case, the Christian Succession Acts of Travancore and Cochin were considered to be religious laws supervening the secular Indian Succession Act of 1925. However, in the wake of the Court ruling, the church leaders took conflicting positions in public. The Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Trivandrum, took a positive view and proclaimed: "The time and conditions when the law was made have changed. I am happy that women have been given equal rights, and the church will not stand in the way" (Pillai, 1986: 78).

In contrast, the Synod of the Christian churches led a pulpit campaign against the ruling and arranged legal counsel to help families draft wills to disinherit female heirs. The Synod was responding to the general concern among Syrian Christians that, with the Indian Succession Act becoming operative retrospectively from 1951, increasing litigation by women, including Christian nuns claiming shares in their ancestral property, would tear families apart (see also Agarwal 1994b). But such fears proved to be unfounded for although the Mary Roy case had inspired some women in similar situations to take legal action and increased awareness among many more of the inequities in the practices of devolution, women generally did not proceed to make actual claims against their families.

Mary Roy's case found its most powerful resonance among four Syrian Catholic sisters who, encouraged by Mary's Roy's example, challenged their three brothers for an equal share of the intestate property. The strong similarity between the disputes is the total breakdown in kinship mutuality between the male and female siblings. The three older sisters were married with dowries and were living neolocally. The youngest sister eloped and married on her own, to escape the restrictions her brothers placed on her individual freedom. The court battle among the siblings was the culmination of a long history of conflict within the family that began while their father was still alive. The father was a wealthy Syrian Christian who owned 300 acres of rubber, coconut and spices. Despite his wealth, he gave his older three daughters "poor dowries" which were not in keeping with the family wealth or status. The sisters were of the view that their father had not "sent them with proper respect" and had failed in his obligation to provide "generous dowries" for them. In addition, he had broken his promise of gifting a piece of land to his oldest daughter which her husband later purchased from his father-in-law. One of them summed up their feelings in the following words:

Our father could have given us much more. He was a strict man who wanted to control everything. He did not send us off properly, in a manner befitting his wealth and status in the community. He was a tyrant and even our brothers had to ask for every cent. Often, our mother wrangled something for them. He wanted to control all the money but because he could not take his wealth with him when he died, he had to leave it behind. Now our brothers have taken over the property and they do not want to share it with us.

The father's will dealt 80 acres of his land to the three sons as their inheritance (*purushadan*) and five acres each to the three married daughters (in addition to the dowries he had already given them). The will left out the youngest daughter who was unmarried at the time of the father's death, as well as about 200 acres which became intestate. The women requested that the intestate property be divided equally among the children. Not only did the brothers refuse but they also tried to appropriate the five acres of land that the father had written to each of the three daughters. The brothers rejected the sisters' claims to their shares of the intestate property because the three older sisters had already been dowered. The brothers also denied dowry to the youngest sister who married a young man of her choice belonging to a different Christian denomination. The three brothers tried to force her into an arranged marriage and went to the extent of restricting her to the house despite their mother's protests.

When the property dispute could not be settled amicably within the family, the sisters took the matter to court. The three older sisters were emphatic that they would not have challenged their brothers if the family had remained united, as "family unity was more important than material gains." What provoked the women to litigation was the intransigence of the brothers, the lack of respect shown to their husbands, the treatment of their mother and the harassment of the youngest sister. When threatened with the loss of their traditional inheritance privileges, the brothers reacted violently, by threatening to assault them, damaging their properties, and maligning them in the community. They even tried to suppress the father's will. The result was a total breakdown in kinship mutuality and the four sisters felt free to openly challenge their brothers.

The sisters were encouraged by the fact that they had nothing to lose since their ties with their brothers were severed and all the sordid details of their quarrel had become public knowledge. Freed from the constraints of kinship norms and obligations of "female sacrifice," "loyalty to kin" and the "subordination of self-interest for the

greater good of the family," the four sisters were able to stake their claims to a share of inheritance, separate from and in addition to the dowry they had already received. The sisters had no emotional attachment to the intestate property that had brought nothing but "trouble" to the family and were prepared to sell off their share of the intestate property after the case was over.

As in the Mary Roy case, the counter-hegemonic efforts of these women were dismissed by many Syrian Christians on the grounds that dowered daughters have no right to family inheritance. However, in responding to community criticism, the sisters were quick to defend their actions, as one of them noted: "They [the community] are saying you have been given *stridhanam* [dowry] and five acres, so why are you asking more; but we as women get *stridhanam* and our brothers get *purushadam* (son's share), so the remaining property must be shared equally."

Apart from the breakdown in kinship mutuality, the specific reactions of the women in the intestate cases can also be explained by applying Bina Agarwal's (1994b: 54) concept of "fall-back position" which she defines as "the outside options which determine how well off he or she would be if co-operation ceased." The women in this case had the support of their affinal families and the resources necessary to fight their brothers. The displacement of the customary laws by gender-neutral secular laws have strengthened women's "fall-back position," and created a counter-hegemonic space that is of special relevance for the resolution of property issues. Mary Roy's case has proved to be a watershed in the development of a counter-hegemonic process among Syrian Christians. The case of the four sisters against their male siblings is another instance of that process that has begun to unfold, however unevenly and tentatively within the Syrian Christian community.

The Kinship Universe: Testamentary Succession and Dowry Prestations

In contrast to the experiences of Mary Roy, her co-petitioners and the four sisters, there are copious examples of married daughters and "incorporated" wives, as well as widowed women, receiving material assistance from their natal families in keeping with the norms and sentiments of kinship mutuality. In these instances, the customary laws are ignored and married daughters are given property under testation or through intestate inheritance, even when they are not "residual heirs." Despite the established view that a dowered and incorporated daughter has no further claims on the property of her natal family, much of what goes on by way of property transmission

depends on the goodwill and discretion of male kin, the quality of kinship, family wealth and the demands of the marriage and dowry markets. Property is transmitted to married daughters as inheritance after their marriage in addition to the dowry they had received at the time of their marriages, while widowed women receive assistance in the form of cash, land, or dowry contributions to their daughters. Unmarried women are accommodated as part of the joint or extended families, or supported by their male siblings. Such assistance and supports cannot be read as "claims" over family property (Agarwal, 1994b: 251), since there is no legal basis in secular or customary laws; but they are significant mechanisms for "opening the door for women to share in the family wealth" (Goody, 1990: 287). In any case, women are not mere "vehicles for the transfer of property to [their] sons" (Agarwal 1994b: 251), although this is true in families without sons who may choose to endow a grandson or a son-in-law. As residual or direct heirs, women receive property in their own right as "daughters" and as "sisters," either as pre-mortem inheritance (Goody and Tambiah, 1993), or as separate dowry and inheritance prestations. Land and houses are deeded to the daughter as an heiress and her dowry may be dispensed with in anticipation of her future inheritance or given as delayed dowry. In cases where women are entitled to family inheritance, hardly any demands are made on dowry although there is little doubt that the entitlements of these women are reason enough for prospective affines not to insist on dowry as a condition of marriage. For instance, when the second of two daughters of Cherian and Rose insisted on marrying without a dowry, her parents had no difficulty arranging a marriage for her within their community because it was known that she stood to inherit the family home and a share of cash. On the other hand, a similar insistence by Theresa, a Syrian Christian welfare officer and without a family property to inherit, resulted in her cross-caste marriage to a Latin Catholic because a marriage within the caste community could not be arranged.

Beena, a young widow, did not receive a dowry at the time of her marriage as her father could not provide a cash dowry by selling off the family land. Three years after her marriage, one of her three brothers gave her a delayed cash dowry from his own earnings. When her father died intestate her brothers gave her an equal share of the family land. Beena wrote her share over to her brothers as she did not want the property to "leave the family." For Beena, the dowry she had received from her brother was compensation enough for the land she had forfeited. She informed me that her brothers' show of support after her husband's death was very reassuring

and she had no doubts in her mind of their continuing support of herself and her two young children in the future. The experiences of women, such as Beena, explain why some women are willing to forfeit their inheritance and their claim on family property. Dowered daughters are also sensitive to the demands that dowry places on their parents and male siblings and are not in favour of making more demands against the interests of their families who may have already overextended themselves in providing dowries for their marriages.

Leelamma, a Syrian Christian Catholic in her 40s, received a dowry of Rs. 40 000 at her marriage and a share of the family property from her father two years later. Her three brothers asked her to transfer her share of the land to them to consolidate all the parcels for development. Leelamma initially refused as she was unwilling to part with the property her father had given her. Besides, she has children of her own and their only income came from a restaurant that her husband and she owned. This led to several disagreements between her brothers and herself. Such conflicts are common, particularly when married sisters must consider the future property needs of their own children. Many months and several arguments later, Leelamma agreed to sign her land over to her brothers believing that it would be in her long-term interest to co-operate with her brothers. She reasoned that "conflicts over property passed from one generation to the next and they are not worth the time, effort and breakdown in family relations which would follow." However, by relinquishing her share, Leelamma was establishing "claims" on her brothers and ensuring her future security by appealing to sentiments of kinship mutuality. Yet even here, moral considerations such as family loyalty and unity took precedence over the anticipated material or emotional benefits that would accrue from the forfeiture of her inheritance. The moral prerogatives of kinship norms (i.e., women must not claim, family unity and female sacrifice) are as important for defining the outcomes of household bargaining involving the genders as the emotional dimension of gender relationships emphasized by Sen (1990a). The outcomes of "co-operative conflicts" may skew the outcomes in favour of men, since women are expected to carry the greater moral burdens of maintaining kinship.

Women who benefit by household devolutionary practices may often act as agents of patriarchy in transmitting their inheritance to male successors. Bina Agarwal's (1994a: 93) question as to why women are sex selective in promoting their son's needs at the expense of daughters and her questioning of "sex-selective altruism" (i.e., a mother's love for her son) have a bearing on women's

"socialization for inequality" (Papanek, 1990). However, as the following example shows, such preferential treatment may not always be directed at sons, but discriminately directed at a daughter who can best guarantee the well-being of a mother. As others (Agarwal, 1994a; Kandyoti, 1997; Papanek, 1990) have noted in different contexts, women as "mothers" may use strategies of devolution in self-interested ways, even if it is at the expense of their daughters.

Kunjamma is a twice married woman of considerable wealth. She inherited the wealth of her first husband George, who died young. As a young widow and mother of two daughters and two sons, she married Mathew, a wealthy widower with a daughter and two sons. Kunjamma is an astute businesswoman with investments in a newspaper business and landed property. She is also a woman of exceptional power and influence in the domestic sphere, with almost total control over her inheritance from her first marriage and gifts of property from her second. Yet, in devolving the property gained from her two marriages, she was more favourable to her sons than to her daughters. Between her two daughters, Kunjamma was selectively favour able to her younger daughter who is married to her step son, the youngest son of her present husband. Her step son/son-in-law would also be assigned the role of supporter of his parents, a role for which he would receive the family home as part of his inheritance, according to the rule of ultimogeniture. Kunjamma gave her second daughter a larger dowry and continued favours in the form of produce from her farm lands. In contrast, Kunjamma arranged her elder daughter Nina's marriage to a Syrian Christian man of lower status for a smaller dowry.

During my conversations with Nina, she accused her mother of favouring her sister over her and attributed the indignities she suffered at the hands of her husband and her affines to the poor dowry she had received. Nina, also interpreted her mother's preferential treatment of her sister as part of her mother's efforts to secure her future security and position in her old age, when she would be constrained to live with her stepson and daughter. Kunjamma explained to me that Nina's small dowry was in Nina's own interest, as anything more would have been appropriated by Nina's in-laws. Such delayed payments are often used to prevent the misuse of dowries, but I have observed this to be a strategy among wealthy families, or families with more status advantage over the groom's family and who are in a better bargaining position, to delay dowry payments or to pay lower dowries to their daughters. In the end, Nina chose to by-pass her mother and complain to her step-father with whom she

had a close relationship. Nina's protests were rewarded, and she was given land to build her conjugal home and promised a "delayed dowry payment" in the form of cash as inheritance for her three sons.

Male-biased inheritance practices frequently generate property conflicts between in-marrying daughters-in-law and out-marrying daughters. Preetha, a young and wealthy widow, is a fortuitous beneficiary and willing executor of the patrilineal rules of inheritance. She had married the only son of a wealthy family. When her husband died young, Preetha inherited her husband's family property from her widowed mother-in-law, who was in turn, the trustee of her husband's property. Preetha's four sisters-in-law had all been given substantial cash dowries but were excluded from the even more substantial family land. Preetha herself has three daughters and no sons, and she transferred the family property to her three daughters as dowries. She gave the largest share and the family home as dowry to her youngest daughter whose husband became Preetha's *dattuputran*, or adopted son (-in-law), who would eventually be the heir to the family property. The adopted son (-in-law), assumed the name and lineage identity of his father-in-law (Preetha's husband). The passage of the family home and land to "affinal outsiders," caused tensions and eventual enmity between Preetha and her sisters-in-law which resulted in Preetha's estrangement from her in-laws.

Out-marrying daughters with similar experiences generally complain about a system that excludes them from their family estate while giving in-marrying women rights of enjoyment and even control over the same property. In the case of out-marrying daughters, the fear of such property being alienated to affinal outsiders i.e., sons-in-law, or being sold, is also given as reasons for excluding women from landed property. Such exclusions are also justified on the grounds that what a daughter loses by way of inheritance, she can gain by her marriage to a propertied man.

The dowries of in-marrying daughters-in-law can be a potential source of acrimony between sons, when the relative inheritance of a son is based on the dowry brought in by his wife. A son who contributes to a sister's dowry, or whose wife's dowry is used for the same purpose, might inherit a greater share of the available family wealth. Thus the early division of family property may be demanded by a son to prevent the dowry of his wife being used for the dowry of a sister, or for paying outstanding family debts. A married brother might also neglect the needs of his married sisters in the interest of his own conjugal family. Such behaviour creates tensions and ill feelings within families and sometimes results in the exclu-

sion of the recalcitrant son from the family patrimony. The dowries of in-marrying women also cause tensions between "co-sisters" (*nathoonmar*—brothers' wives), who compare their dowries and stake claims for preferential treatment in the affinal family.

Despite normative statements linking dowry (of wives) and inheritance (of husbands) and their convergence on the conjugal household, there are many instances where such norms are honoured mainly in the breach. Traditionally, the dispersal of dowries followed the development cycle of domestic groups (Goody, 1990) as the dowry of an in-marrying wife and the inheritance of a son converged as one payment and devolved on the couple when the conjugal house was set up. The times of bestowal often coincided with the building of a separate house, the birth of the first child, or the marriage of a granddaughter. While dowry still devolves in these ways, there are also instances where the dowry remains in the hands of male affines. The customary practice of the family patriarch controlling the dowry was linked to the very young age at which couples married in the past and their residence in extended family households where resources were often pooled and distributed. The more mature age of marrying and neolocal residential practices that are now becoming common, do not appear to have greatly changed the old practices, and even married professionals (male and female) have their dowries controlled or appropriated by the father or the father-in-law. In short, the nuclearization of households has not eliminated the power of family patriarchs who continue to control the properties of married sons and the dowries of their daughters-in-law. The dowry of Elizabeth, a 28-year-old teacher married to an engineer, was used by her father-in-law to settle his outstanding debts. Elizabeth was reluctant to ask her husband about her dowry and will certainly not broach the subject with her father-in-law, since such questions are considered "improper and out of taste." Elizabeth and her husband live in a small, rented apartment on the ground floor of a house. They saved money to buy a piece of land to build their house, and took a bank loan for its construction. There are women like Elizabeth who speak of the difficulties they experience in not being able to use their dowries for the well-being of their conjugal families. Even when dowry is transferred to the conjugal household, it is not the woman but her husband who is usually in control of the disbursement of the dowry. But women seldom complain of this as gender disparity (husband/wife) in domestic property control takes second place to collective conjugal interests. The control of property by affinal relatives is a different matter, however, even though women do not overtly make the control of

dowry and the husband's inheritance an issue in dealing with their affines. The appropriation of the dowries of married women by their affinal families, regardless of their inheritance or disinheritance as "daughters" by their natal families, challenges the view of dowry as female property with the attendant assumption that the dowered women are in control of the use of dowry.

Although women in wealthy middle-class families with male heirs often receive substantial dowries, their dowries are usually less than the shares received as inheritance by their brothers. Susan, a Syrian Christian widow of 42, received a dowry of Rs. 10 000 at her marriage, which she described to me as "a low amount" compared to her only brother's inheritance of a small rubber plantation, which is a lucrative source of revenue in Kerala. As a widow she cares for her three young children, a daughter and two sons. Since Susan was employed as a teacher at the time of her marriage, her father's reasoning was that the dowry should not be too high for an employed woman. Susan disagrees and believes that a woman's employment should not reduce the amount of dowry, as a woman earns "respect in her husband's house" in proportion to the dowry she brings into the marriage. Susan explained that her "poor dowry" had been the subject of ridicule by her "co-sisters," who had brought bigger dowries. Her persistent complaints to her father about her "poor dowry" resulted in her father transferring Rs. 20 000 and a parcel of land to be used as dowry for Susan's only daughter. Her father's "repentance" as she put it, was partly influenced by the loss of her husband. Susan's situation as a widow has been exacerbated by her isolation from both her natal and affinal families. After Susan's father's death, Susan found herself becoming increasingly alienated from both her natal and affinal families. Her widowed mother lives with her brother's family and they have hardly any contact with Susan and her children. Susan and her husband had set up their conjugal household soon after marriage, but her dowry was not released to the couple. It was incorporated into the affinal household, and Susan has no knowledge of how it was used. However, like many other women, she too articulated her rights in customary terms by emphasizing the links between a husband's inheritance and a wife's dowry, and a woman's right to continued affinal support based on the dowry she brings as an in-marrying wife. These expectations have not been met as Susan's affines are neither materially nor emotionally supportive of her even in matters relating to her children's upbringing. As she put it, "widows without kin support should be pitied."

Discussion

The generalized view of dowry as pre-mortem inheritance and women's insurance in affinal households obfuscates the real issues of women's unequal inheritance, be it pre-mortem, intestate, or testamentary inheritance, and their relative (or varying) powerlessness in property control or property decisions in most households. Further complicating women's position has been the legal prohibition of dowry, which, while hopelessly failing to curtail its practice, has made it impossible for women to reclaim their dowries from defaulting in-laws. Traditionally, widowed and divorced women were able to reclaim their dowry, a practice that operated to ensure women's economic security. Unlike women who can now legally demand equal shares in intestate inheritance, Syrian Christian women whose dowries are expropriated by their affines cannot use the law to reclaim them because dowry is illegal. The prohibition of dowry without corresponding legal changes to give equal inheritance rights to women, has left women with no option but to rely on dowry as their only means of securing their rightful share of parental property. For this reason, many women in Kerala and elsewhere in India, are supportive of the dowry practice even though it is prohibited by law on their behalf.

It is equally misleading to summarily dismiss dowry as women's disinheritance. Syrian Christian women, like women in other Indian communities, receive inheritance as residual heirs, which might be given entirely as dowry at the time of marriage or given as testamentary inheritance after marriage. While Syrian Christian women receiving dowry were not eligible for further inheritance under the now defunct Travancore and Cochin Succession Acts, as a result of the Mary Roy case Syrian women can now demand equal shares of the intestate family property after discounting the daughters' *stridhanam* and the sons' *purushadan*. Furthermore, the giving of dowry does not signal a woman's material severance from her natal family, as married women do expect and receive continued material and emotional support from their natal families.

The myriad of property situations and women's varying responses among the Syrian Christians and other Indian communities, suggest that dowry and inheritance practices are along a continuum from equal, pre-mortem and/or delayed inheritance, to unequal inheritance as well as separate and discriminatory dowry payments. The nature and the outcome of post-marital property experiences and women's responses—whether they involve acquiescence, accommodation and compromises or resistance in the form of patriarchal bargains, complaints and

outright litigation—depend on how men and women, as spouses, identify themselves with the interests of their conjugal families as opposed to their extended families, and on the state of kinship mutuality between men and women as consanguines. However, women's claims against their cross-sex siblings and their natal families in furtherance of their conjugal family interests should not be taken to mean that women are assuming equal control over property matters, or are having an equal say in property decisions in their conjugal homes. While inter-family conflicts certainly presuppose conjugal co-opera-tion and mutuality, they do not necessarily mean conjugal equality.

The Supreme Court decisions in the Mary Roy and Shahbano cases are important legal milestones in the Indian women's march to gender equality. However, the successful political protests against the Shahbano ruling underscored the absence of social and political legitimacy associated with the Muslim women's claim to gender equality in law. Although there was no political or reli-gious opposition by Syrian Christians to the ruling in the Mary Roy case, there was ample evidence of gender bias in the judicial system both before and after the Supreme Court ruling, as well as in regard to the case involving the four sisters. A number of Syrian Christian women, besides the litigants referred to in this paper, have indi-cated to me that the gender bias in the judicial system is a major reason for women's distrust of the legal process and their reluctance to take the legal route to claiming equal shares with men in intestate succession. Needless to say, Syrian Christian as well as other Indian women are always under kinship and social pressures to forego such claims in the name of family unity and values and women's special role in preserving them.

The "moral dilemma" of Syrian Christian women in choosing between their legal rights and their kinship obli-gations is a manifestation of the tension between the hegemony of traditional cultural norms and religious laws, on the one hand, and the counter-hegemony gener-ated by secular laws, awareness of legal rights and the discourse around gender equality, on the other. If the for-mer has contributed to women's consent to and their com-monsense acceptance of the patriarchal system of prop-erty devolution, the latter facilitates the education of women's dissent and their empowerment in their quest towards equality.

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Pineapples and Oranges, Brahmins and Shudras: Periyar Feminists and Narratives of Gender and Regional Identity in South India

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Abstract: This paper explores the way POWER, a women's organization in Tamil Nadu, draws upon the legacy of Dravidian nationalism in its implementation of feminism. I examine three narrative situations that take place in an area school where POWER is housed. I explore the extent to which their interpretation of feminism provides a context for the emergence of critical practices that attend to inequalities of caste, gender and class and the extent to which it provides avenues for making changes in women's lives. POWER is exemplary of women's organizations that are attached to social movements and which I argue should gain increased attention in anthropology. Drawing on a feminist practice approach I suggest that ethnographic methods provide an important means to capture the way such organizations reproduce and challenge social inequalities which may be culturally situated, but which also embrace globalizing practices in which feminism itself is deeply embedded.

Keywords: gender, feminism, development, Dravidian Social Movements

Résumé : Cet article explore la manière dont POWER, une organisation féminine du Tamil Nadu, utilise le legs du nationalisme Dravidien dans la mise en oeuvre de son féminisme. J'examine trois situations narratives qui ont lieu dans une école de secteur où POWER est logée. J'explore jusqu'à quel point leur interprétation du féminisme fournit un contexte pour l'apparition des pratiques critiques qui se rapportent aux inégalités de caste, de genre et de classe et jusqu'à point auxquels elle fournit des avenues pour accomplir des changements dans la vie des femmes. POWER est un exemple d'organismes féministes qui se consacrent aux mouvements sociaux et qui, à mon avis, devrait attirer davantage l'attention en anthropologie. M'appuyant sur une approche de pratique féministe je soutiens que les méthodes ethnographiques fournissent un moyen important pour saisir la manière que de tels organisations se reproduisent et défient les inégalités sociales qui peuvent être situées dans des cultures

Mots-clés : rapports sociaux de sexe, féminisme, développement, mouvements sociaux dravidiens

Pineapples and Oranges, the title of this paper, is the metaphor for caste difference that "Periyar feminists"[1] employed in a consciousness raising activity at the Periyar Polytechnic school for girls in Tamil Nadu, south India. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the persistence of caste difference, and the shared experiences of women who followed Hindu practices. The activity was designed for the mostly lower, "Backward Caste"[2] teachers and staff who work at the school. Women were seated in a circle and arbitrarily designated in sequence as "pineapples, apples, bananas or oranges." These fruits correspond to Brahmins, Kshatryias, Vaiyshas and Shudras, the four Varna which hierarchically classify people within the Hindu caste system. The women were asked to stand up and move to distinguish whom they could marry and with whom they would normally socialize. In response, pineapples, representing Brahmins, congregated at one portion of the circle while oranges, representing Shudras, ended up opposite them. After many more questions, the women were encouraged to imagine a society where fruits mixed, by moving about the circle in free association.

During the winter of 2000, I lived in the Periyar Polytechnic and participated in the events organized by Periyar feminists, including the activity described above. I sought to answer the call by Kamala Visweswaran for feminist anthropology to consider the "shape feminism takes in other parts of the world," (Visweswaran, 1995: 615) including the relationship between feminism and women's participation in related social movements. While women's social and political agency is well documented by feminist anthropology, only more recently is some attention paid to the diverse responses of women as actors in social movements and their deployment of feminism specifically in these forms of activism.[3] This is an important direction for feminist anthropology to take, in order to apprehend women's participation in modernity, and because "feminism"

itself is now an "inescapable term of reference" (Abu-Lughod, 1998: 3) in the gender politics of postcolonial societies. Specifically, women's activism unfolds in specific social contexts and it articulates with pre-existing or emergent ideologies and practices, including nationalist, environmental, labour, and fundamentalist mobilizations. These movements impact on the way women interpret feminist practices and the way social issues, gendered experiences and utopian visions are imagined.

In this paper I examine the way Periyar feminists in south India draw upon their attachment to a social movement in their interpretation of feminism. I explore the extent to which Periyar feminism provides a context for the emergence of critical practices that attend to inequalities of caste, gender and class and the extent to which it provides avenues for making changes in women's lives.

Periyar feminists are teachers and staff who formed POWER, a women's organization and NGO, during an exchange with educators in Newfoundland, Canada. However, the structure of the organization and the analysis of women's "empowerment" and "inequality" which informs their activities is framed by their membership in a regional social movement, the Dravidiar Kazhagam. This movement emerged during the height of resistance to British colonial rule in the early 20th century and forms the basis for Dravidian nationalism in Tamil Nadu. Periyar feminism resonates with this ideology and the particular vision of its founder, E.V. Ramsamy Naicker, who is fondly and reverently known to his followers, as Periyar, meaning the "Great Leader."[4] Hence, women's oppression is officially understood as an effect of Brahmin and Hindu dominance, and religious, caste and linguistic difference within India. At the same time, POWER is an organization that explicitly draws upon feminist practices. It deploys consciousness-raising strategies and conveys a gender analysis that its organizers perceive to be connected to feminism, transnationally, and within India.

I suggest, through an analysis of several narrative contexts, that feminist discourse can reproduce existing social inequalities, and yet challenge them, particularly when it draws upon, but does not merely reproduce, culturally located social practices. Women associated with POWER, their subjectivities, their participation, and the webs of power, privilege and inequalities in which they are embedded, are constituted by complex social and political fields: Transnational development initiatives, a selective use of feminism, and the relations of caste, gender, and linguistic differences which inform the Dravidian movement and Indian society. Hence,

POWER exemplifies an expanding and common form of women's organization cross-culturally, those which tend to be "directed" (Molyneux, 998: 229) by the agenda set by social movements or states. The complex and varied impact this trend engenders resurrects old debates in new ways which anthropologists are well positioned to examine.

The expansion of women's, and gender-based issues into international governing, development, and social movement discourses provokes reflection on the impact of feminism as a discourse and a transnational social movement. Time worn debates prevail. Are women's needs and interests best served through autonomous organizations? What do women gain or lose when they participate in organizations that attend to national liberation, cultural identity, poverty or environmental issues?[5] Should strategies for change involve an "engagement" with pre-existing institutions and cultural practices? (Basu, 1995; Razavi and Miller, 1998). If so, what is the impact on protest-oriented activism?

Feminist anthropology has critically challenged western feminist projects, (Gordon, 1999; Strathern, 1987; Wisweswaran, 1997; Wittrup, 1993; Wolf, 1996) to favour broadly construed, culturally specific understandings of gender, resistance and power. This exemplifies anthropology's general reluctance to embrace macro frameworks for understanding social and political agency, and to situate everyday forms of activism and resistance culturally and historically (Edelman, 2000: 309). This is particularly important to capture in settings where social and political barriers render radical responses by women impractical, dangerous or impossible. Such a position however, reflects a cultural sensitivity that is politically charged and often promoted by governing bodies. It may favour reformism, marginalize protest-orientated activism and de-politicize issues (Assies and Salman, 2000: 293; Razavi and Miller, 1998).

Consider that "women's issues" are now addressed in a wide range of social movements and within government and international bodies, all of which may draw selectively on empowerment, women and/or gender-based analysis to institute and legitimate changes in womens' lives in varying and potentially divergent ways (Kabeer, 1999). Debates over effective strategy, and the nature of gender and power occur in a context where the mainstreaming of gender issues is either applauded, or scrutinized as an instrument of international governing practices (Goetz, 1998: 45-47; Miller and Razavi, 1998: 3-4). Such debates are played out in India where thousands of voluntary organizations flourish alongside women-centred organizations; both can be ambiguously

structured, as vehicles of advocacy, as NGOs, as service providers and are often tied to bilateral donors, international activist organizations and the Indian and regional governments (John, 2001: 100-113). India joins in the cry against dowry, violence against women, the feminization of poverty and the social stigmatization of girls and women to give the impression that there is some shared understanding of the problems women face.

However, the appearance of common fronts in gender issues belies the contradictory and conflicting positions beneath over how these issues should be addressed. This makes it crucial to track the way feminisms are deployed, embedded or implicated in practices which may both challenge and reproduce social and economic inequalities and social orders. It is also important for examining the way feminism becomes implicated in marginalizing or activating groups of women.

In India, autonomous women's organizations have flourished (Agnew, 1997; Kannabirin, and Kannabirin, 1997). Yet, ideas about westernization articulate with local social and cultural relations of power to produce what Ray refers to as "political fields" (Ray, 1999). These fields position women's participation in specific directions that can include or marginalize a woman's centred approach and the expression of transnational feminist identities. The definition of feminism itself and the meaning of women's interests, becomes implicated in debates over westernization. In India, stereotypes of feminism as a selfish, individualistic assertion of rights, embodies the excesses of Western individualism (Narayan, 1997: 3-10).

An anthropological perspective can highlight how political fields are culturally mediated, supported or contested within social domains. This includes schools, NGOs and women's organizations, such as POWER, where modernizing processes and emancipatory practices intersect with gender norms and historically rooted social relations (cf Fox and Stern, 1997). However, given the concern to avoid Western feminist imperialism, the self-reflexive orientation of a feminist practice approach is important here, to acknowledge the way women's movements and feminism itself is constituted in a transnational context of power where ideas "migrate" (Marsh, 1998: 666) in an uneven circulation of exchange.

Feminists point to numerous ways of addressing feminist field work dilemmas (Wolf, 1996)[6] including Visweswaran's call for feminist anthropologists to take a position of dis-identification (Visweswaran, 1997). The purpose of this starting point, which I draw upon here, is twofold: To avoid the assumption that gender is an essential commonality between ethnographer and subjects (Visweswaran, 1997); and to situate the anthropologist in an analysis that seeks to capture the way inequalities are reproduced and transformed at the crossroads of structured relations and subjective responses (Wolf, 1996; Roseman, 1999: 212).

Here, I examine POWER from its own self-identified position, as a reformist women's organization, which uses "feminism" selectively. Strategies for change are perceived to be connected to Periyar's ideology, and a sense of what is appropriate for Indian and specifically, Tamil society as articulated by its leaders. I explore three narrative contexts to analyze the way gender, related social inequalities and feminism are framed and interpreted by local women, particularly leaders of POWER. Two of these narratives—public celebrations where POWER's initiatives were promoted, and "gender awareness" workshops, were held at the school where POWER is located, and were generated by its leaders and members of the DK. However, my analysis also derives from a third context, the personal narratives of female leaders of POWER and other group discussions that I was more instrumental in initiating.

The attention to narrative shares much with attempts to culturally locate "narratives of resistance" as diagnostics of power (Abu-Lughod, 1990); and yet, as "social disruptions" narratives can also unsettle the normative flow of social scripts, to reveal relations of inequality (Roseman, 1999: 212). The ethnographic thrust here is the assumption that such narratives unfold within specific social sites of action where cultural meanings are produced and contested and in which the local, global and national intersect, an approach that is often missing from critical discourse analysis (Blommaert, 2000: 460). I am interested however, in narrative contexts where feminist practices are enacted, with the assumption that social movements, as discourses of transformation, produce agency, including expressions of resistance to the movements themselves. They also privilege certain experiences over others and can exclude specific groups of women.[7]

Schools are particularly important sites for the reproduction of culture and the creation of modern subjects. The offer "increased freedom and opportunity," (Levinson and Holland, 1996: 1-9) particularly for women who have long been a focus of debate within educational, colonial, state and international development agenda in India. (Forbes, 1996; Sudarshan, 2000). Yet, schools can both reproduce and reconstitute social orders, including the subjectivities of staff, teachers and students (Porter, 1998). Schools are a site where the

legacy of Dravidian nationalism, gender identities and feminist practices are inscribed and deployed to socialize, and activate teachers, staff and students in Tamil Nadu. Periyar feminism unfolds in a political field, where powerful social and cultural forces support the expression of women's chastity, and caste-based marriage in spite of rapid changes and uneven processes of urbanization. I summarize these dynamics briefly below, before turning to the narratives which prevailed at the school.

The Context of Gender and POWER

POWER is housed in a Polytechnic school for girls, in the semirural outskirts of Tanjore, the "rice belt" district of south India. The Polytechnic is redolent with Periyar's ideology and rhetoric. Slogans such as "Chastity symbolizes slavery of women and makes her anybody's chattel," for example, are inscribed above the classroom doorways and along the interior courtyard. Since its formation, POWER has focused its activity on schools and some 50 villages that surround them. It has addressed infanticide amongst certain caste groups, and violence against women, and established income generating schemes, training programs and poverty alleviation schemes for destitute and abandoned women and widows. The Polytechnic itself, comprised of 150 staff and 500 students, offers commercial, architectural, engineering and computer training to girls aged 16 to 20. Some of these girls will continue their education at the nearby Periyar engineering college that offers degrees for young women, aged 18 to 25 and a few men. Others, will marry and get paid work, or return to their villages and tend to families. Most of the women included here are from rural, semirural or smaller towns. There are few Brahmin or "forward" caste women at the school, and "scheduled caste" women are represented, but mainly as support staff, (cleaners, sweepers, servers); as clients in villages, as well as young female students. A survey I conducted of 746 staff and students at both schools shows that 87% of them are Hindu, mostly from the Backward Caste, 36%, followed by Scheduled castes, 12.6%; Most Backward castes, 11%; Forward castes, 5.6%. There were no Brahmins in the samples I took. Over half of the respondents however, self-identified as "middle caste." The women connected to POWER through the school represent a cross-section of women in rural and semi-urban Tamil society, and their relative education, class and caste position reflects emergent differences between women, and the uneven, changing status of women's lives in this region.

Tamil women are perceived as having relatively greater autonomy, mobility and control in relation to men, than their north Indian counterparts. While I do not embark here on a comparative assessment of women's lives in India, I point to the fact that this assumption was common amongst Tamil women I met. It also has some support in ethnographic and social science research (Kabeer, 1999; Kapadia, 1993; Lessinger, 1989; Vero-Sanso, 1998/99) including women's relatively higher literacy and lower fertility rates (Basu, 1999: 238-240; Kabeer, 1999: 452-456) and in the historical practices of some "Backward" castes, which are characterized as "Dravidian." For example, historically, the relative higher status of Tamil women—particularly, non-Brahmin Tamil women was attributed to the predominance of a Dravidian kinship system which favoured village and kin endogamy (in contrast to village exogamy practiced in the north) and engendered strong matri-lateral social ties that cross-cut patrilineality (Kapadia, 1993; Vero-Sanso, 1998/9).

Changes in the last few decades include uneven patterns of urbanization and industrialization, increased participation of women in education and the paid workforce and changes in fertility and reproductive patterns (Basu,1999; Kabeer, 1999). Women have gained increased opportunity and formal equality from these changes. Moreover, there is some indication that while some women are both gaining status and control over their lives, others are losing customary rights and obligations that historically provided women with some spheres of relative influence and power in rural areas (Kapadia, 1993). Some studies suggest that the uneven and accelerated urbanization and the upward mobility of lower caste groups in Tamil Nadu has generated a shift toward emulating north Indian practices, particularly of dowry, son preference and a decline in matri-lateral marriage ties (Kapadia, 1993; Basu, 1999).

The Indian Government does not provide compulsory, free and universal primary education and only 59% of children between the ages of five and 14 attend school. This makes education, as it has been since the colonial period, a significant source of either empowerment or inequality depending on one's access. Education has increased divisions within kin and caste groups particularly in rural areas. Although women's access to education is increasing, sons are still more likely to be educated over daughters because they are preferred in terms of cash investments (Kapadia, 1993: 35) and because they are perceived to be the future breadwinners. It is often considered that parents already invest in daughters through dowry. Moreover, education differ-

ences in lower-and middle-caste rural households have increased as higher educated men seek educated women who are then withdrawn from rural work to live as wives in semi-seclusion. (Kapadia, 1993: 39). At the same time, literacy rates for women are high in Tamil Nadu, at 51.3% compared to 25.3% literacy for women living in a north Indian state such as Uttar Pradesh. Yet, they lag far behind Kerala.[8]

These factors may be weakening the importance of, and control exercised within the joint family. This family arrangement historically placed constraint on wives, particularly the newly married. However, in her study of urban families, Vero-Sanso (1998/9) challenges the notion that daughter-in-laws are still submissive to their dominant mother-in-laws in many urban households. These changes have created more varied residence arrangements and in some cases, transformed the dynamics of living in the joint family household, particularly in urban areas (Vero-Sanso, 1989/9). Increasingly, newly married couples reside in separate households from their paternal parents, and often at a distance. Now, in some cases, elderly parents may move to the houses of their children (not the reverse). Moreover, women's education provides them, or rather their parents, with more bargaining power in dowry negotiations. Once married, their power for example, in decision-making in the joint family is enhanced should they remain in paid employment after marriage.

Nonetheless, women are expected to perform as sacrificing mothers, obedient daughters-in-law and wives, social roles that support chastity as an expression of femininity and form a dominant script. These norms frame the way women are evaluated and enabled to participate in the "public sphere" (Dickey, 2000; 468-469). The practice of female modesty and chastity shapes female and male relations and fosters segregation between men and women. This ethos of male and female "avoidance" is more flexible in Tamil Nadu, but it nonetheless, shares cultural assumptions with more rigid practices found in the north (Dickey, 2000: 468; Lessinger, 1989: 109). Such values shape women's mobility, the range and extent of their choices in paid work and family life as well as their sexuality, in spite of differences between Adi-Dravida and Moslem women for example (Kapadia, 1995: 5; Lessinger, 1989). Chastity, and parent-arranged marriage supports the maintenance of caste which remains a central means of organizing family, reproduction and one's social networks.

Finally, the expansion of Westernized stereotypes in the media in addition to Tamil romance stories, combine to create a contradictory set of images for women: they are normally expected to conform to their parents' choices, and to engage in arranged, caste-endogamous marriage. And yet, in popular culture, women are cast as lovers, divas, sacrificing mothers, sisters, wives, and schemers. They are depicted as bold, lascivious, autonomous, and independent, as well as devoted, dependent and self-sacrificing. This makes it increasingly confusing for young Tamil women to understand their own place in Indian society. The mixed messages these images convey reflect both an increase in women's opportunities and an increase in their responsibilities and pressures, as well as broader changes in Indian society.

As surveys and interviews revealed however, students, including those from villages (more than half), are obtaining an education because their parents perceive it to be important for obtaining both a good husband and possible employment. Yet, these parents also demand strict codes of chastity for their daughters and a school environment that encourages feminine respectability and discourages "love" matches. Most teachers in fact, favour mixed gender schooling. Although they also acknowledge the positive effects of a female-peer environment, the gender segregation is in part a response to parental demands.

A bust of Periyar is situated at the dusty crossroads, equidistant to the school and a nearby Periyar Engineering College. It signifies the strong support inhabitants of this district have displayed for the Dravidian movement and the political offshoots it spawned (Barnett, 1976). Periyar was a founding leader of the Dravidian movement, beginning with the Self-Respect Movement in the 1930s, which became the *Dravidar Kazhagam* in 1944. Periyar, like other social reformers (Forbes, 1996; Sinha, 1994), connected women's subordination to colonial oppression; however, he focussed on Brahmin dominance in religious, economic and political affairs as the source of both women's and Tamil subordination. These inequalities which prevailed in 19th-century Tamil Nadu, had precipitated the formation of an anti-Brahmin movement amongst non-Brahmin Tamils who, in spite of their own social and economic divisions, were subsumed by their common classification as "Backward Castes."[9] From the 1930s onward, Periyar sought women's equality by promoting education, paid work and widow remarriage, and by arguing against arranged, caste-based marriages.

The critical edge of Dravidian nationalism was the way it deployed the discourse of social reform—to tie women's subordination to a larger struggle for the emancipation of Dravidian, non-Brahmins, from both colonial and Brahmin oppression (Forbes, 1996: 73-76).

Although it gave up in the attempt to create a separate Dravida state, the movement contributed to the recognition of ethnic/linguistic minorities within the nation and alleviated the social and religious restrictions Hinduism placed on the mobility, opportunities and valuation of lower-caste groups.

Dravidian nationalism de-centred Indian nationalism at a particular historical moment (Ramaswamy, 1994: 309) particularly from the 1930s into the 1960s. However, from the 1950s onward, the DK remained a social movement and became increasingly sidelined by the growth and success of Dravidian political parties that continue to dominate Tamil Nadu state politics. Today, it is arguable that the complex history of Tamil Nadu is subsumed by a historical cultural narrative which emphasizes the original settlement of Dravidian peoples, as opposed to the Aryan oppressors who brought Brahminism and caste to south India. A regional hegemony is conveyed through a selected tradition of *Dravida* culture (Ramaswamy, 1994) and a profound reverence for Dravidian political leaders, particularly those associated with the very popular Tamil film industry (Pandian, 1989; 1991). This hegemony is supported by the political and economic dominance of castes who fall within the "backward" category and the relative under-development of a specifically *Dalit* politics and consciousness in the region (Moses, 1995).

Periyar is often singled out for encouraging women to move beyond the cultural boxes in which they were placed. He was committed to modernist projects, and emphasized rational, secular thought, scientific, and planned development. Moreover, following Periyar's belief that consciousness raising should precede electoral politics, the DK identified itself as a social movement, not a political party. Tamil consciousness was scripted in schools (Ramaswamy, 1994: 309) which were sites for the reproduction of Dravidian nationalism. It is not surprising that the movement turned its energies towards education in the 1970s to establish schools for girls in sciences and higher education in the early 1980s.

Narratives of gender and change that prevail at the school reinforce Dravidian nationalism as an oppositional culture that Periyar symbolizes. How does Periyar's legacy inform the construction of female subjectivities, and women's interpretations of their lives?

Periyar Feminist Narratives: Honouring Periyar and Promoting POWER

At the Polytechnic, Periyar feminism informs the way female subjectivity is constructed through teaching and mentoring, in the numerous public events which are held to honour the accomplishments of teachers and students and to promote the school as a legacy of Periyar and vanguard of the movement. Leaders invoke Periyar feminism selectively; but more often, it is reflected in guises that signify their analysis of gender, women's oppression and their approach to social change. In addition to regular classes, students attend one session per week where Periyar's vision, and his historical significance are recounted by guest lecturers. Numerous events, including graduation, "Annual School Days" and "Open Houses" to inaugurate new programs are held at the school and provide an opportunity to promote POWER, to honour successful students and Periyar as the founding father of the Dravidian movement.

These public events may include an audience of parents, local officials, politicians, and members of the DK. They provide a platform for regional politicians to situate current political issues in the legacy of Dravidian nationalism as an oppositional culture, which Periyar has come to signify. These events are scripted in a way that resonates with the Dravidian movement in the way women's issues are tied to a critical stance towards visions of Indian nation building, particularly nationalist expressions of Hindu communalism which are perceived to support Brahmin dominance. But, while women's issues form a symbolic focus, women as actors are scripted as a supporting cast in the public celebration of the Dravidian movement.

One event which drew several hundred to the schools was held ostensibly to honour female engineering students and to inaugurate the opening of an environmentally sustainable house these women had designed. On that day, the activities began at the Polytechnic, with the arrival of the invited guests, and the current chairmen of the Periyar Foundation who is also the leader of the DK. The students, all female, sporting their school uniforms of black pants and white shirts, were lined single file along the road that led from the security gate to the main school building. The guests (mostly representatives of political parties) arriving by car, and on foot, were greeted by school staff, more students, and a hundred or more guests who were dressed in black and white *lunghis* and *saris*, the ceremonial colours of the *Dravidar Kazhagam*. Female cadets, (who were also students) clad in khaki uniforms, stood in military formation and saluted each guest as they took their place on a covered podium. Guests proceeded to the engineering college, where younger girls, from a neighbouring Periyar matriculation school were already seated on the ground in front of a large stage where a large painting of Periyar provided the pictorial backdrop for the seated guests.

The ceremony began with the Dravidian anthem and dances performed by girls of different ages. The songs welcomed visitors to the event and provided social commentaries on women's lives: the problems surrounding family planning and female infanticide were contrasted with the boldness and confidence women gained by living within Periyar ideology. The representatives of various political parties dotted their speeches with commentary on current political issues, critiques of the rising significance of Hindu communalism, and references to Periyar, including anecdotes from those older men who knew and worked with him.

On the surface, women seemed to be inserted in the event as a supporting cast in the reproduction of a male dominated movement. While most dancers, presenters and helpers were women, all of the honoured guests and speech-makers were male. Yet, young women were well represented amongst those honoured for their contribution to the design of the house. While women were notably absent from public speaking at these kind of events, they did provide introductions and commentary on numerous smaller scale occasions and were encouraged to do so. In other events, Periyar's analysis of gender and inequality was incorporated into official introductions. During one Annual Day celebration for example, the audience of graduating and junior students were congratulated by the leader of the DK, who drew on their success to highlight the benefits for women of a Periyar education. Reciting passages from Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, he suggested, following de Beauvoir, that women's fate was not a foregone conclusion, but in the case of India, a reflection of the "myths of Manu."[10] Just as de Beauvoir called for women to free themselves from the destiny of biology, so too, should young women reject superstitious Hindu beliefs and Brahmanic myths that oppress and impede them from "coming out" and realizing their full equality.

The structure of these events makes it difficult to ascertain how girls and women are interpreting the messages of Periyar feminism, or the extent to which it bears upon their lives. The organization of the events seems to replicate Periyar's own focus on consciousness raising through didactic techniques which were aimed at reaching an audience through speech making. This method was explicitly mentioned by the leader of the DK as he fondly recalled the way Periyar's speeches stirred his interest as a very young man. By contrast, workshops are distinctly different in format, as I illustrate below. I outline a few feminist narratives that were recounted during these workshops and focus specifically on a Periyar feminist narrative that introduced the

event. Then I examine the responses of participants to consider the extent to which Periyar feminist narratives frames these experiences and produces critical reflection.

Gender Workshops: Narratives of Women's and Caste Subordination

"Every person in India, regardless of caste, sex, religion, has a right to freedom, but not a right to change their caste. It is a determining feature of India."

"I equal Tamil feminism to Periyar, through stories. He was a great teacher. The DK isn't a political party—it is an ideology. Periyar's views are safeguarded here." — A Periyar feminist leader

"Gender" workshops have been utilized to provide a context for women to interact and are perceived as an innovative, feminist forum because their format contrasts dramatically with teaching and learning methods employed at the school and because women learned this format through participation in gender and women-focussed conferences. Periyar feminist leaders and other teachers have attended workshops in Newfoundland, Tamil Nadu and other states, which focussed on a variety of topics, including leadership, entrepreneurship and violence and sexual harassment and were organized by international bilateral donors, women's organizations, and governments.

Three all-day workshops were held during my residence which were attended by 90 women who worked as teachers and staff at three schools, as well as a few POWER leaders.[11] All were held in classrooms at one of the Periyar schools and were similar in format. The rearrangement of chairs from rows into circles, the use of brainstorming, small group discussion and facilitators, as well as the incorporation of evaluation are considered innovations. Many participants were uncomfortable or unfamiliar with the format, particularly the encouragement of individual personal storytelling, which they perceived to be a Western tendency towards "public confession."

Consider the narrative that followed the Pineapples and Oranges activity. *A*, a Periyar feminist leader, outlined the essential features of Periyar feminism, including the centrality of caste and religion in shaping the life of women and social inequalities that pervade in India. "Women's lives are shaped by caste, gender and class," she argued, "but these forces are not of equal significance." Rather, "women's fate" is determined by her caste and religious scripts which dictate that "our body

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is our destiny." In spite of women's entry into higher education "she is still sent to her in-law's house." Moreover, Indians, she argued, could theoretically change their language, their place of residence, their economic status—"everything but their caste." "In other countries they say that class is the key element. But economic status is not rigid. In India? It is caste. Caste is fixed. How did this happen?"

The historical narrative that followed outlined the rich tradition of Tamil culture and the transformation and subordination of that culture by the Aryan invasion and Brahmin dominance.

"Before, people lived according to the five landscapes, with nature. People from the hills, from the fields, from coastal places. There was no hierarchy. Then came the entry of Brahmin culture. There came a change in marriage customs; change in the way padi and water are poured. Before, men and children also wore tali. Only later did it become a symbol of chastity, a bond relationship of women to their husbands. Even now women worry that if they do not wear their tali, something bad will come to their husbands."

She reminded listeners that the creation story, the Purusa, in which Brahmins emerge from the head, Kshatryias from shoulders, and Shudras the feet, was nothing but a myth. It is these values of Brahminical purity and superiority, she argued, now removed from its economic and occupational moorings, that reigns in India and ultimately shapes women's subordination. Lower castes strive to imitate "the higher ups," to gain status, to observe Brahminical rule and restrictions. Yet, women, she argued, will never attain the purity that is sought. "We do not think of the strength of our own body and its beauty. Delivery is seen as polluting; our stages of life are called impure; that which doesn't happen to men's bodies are called impure. Why do women kill their female child? It's not just economic. Why isn't a girl child preferable? While the Hindu "myths of Manu" ensure that women can never attain purity, "in Dravidian culture, women were given importance. Women are goddesses; the virgin goddess, called mother. All her people are her children."

A completed her lecture by reminding participants to act individually, but in the collective of their "society," their "community," terms which are often used when referring to one's kin and caste-based social networks. By contrast, two local activists, who were not members of POWER, drew on the expression "the personal is political" to inspire participants to act. Their talks focussed on the religion and the history of women's political activism in south India as told through their own experiences. N declared to the women, "You all have good salaries, an education, a job, why should you worry about others? Why should you be activists?" Later, P, a 60-year-old activist responded that while "politics takes place in the tea shops and women remain in the kitchen...change is in the air." She then detailed the extensive grassroots organizations and female-headed NGOs that operate in Tamil Nadu, some to protest, others to lobby government. P linked these local groups to the most recent conference on violence in Trichy, the National Alliance of Women's Organization, the Asia Pacific Women's Forum and called on women to think "globally and act locally."

Interpreting Periyar Feminism and Women's Experiences

During these workshops female participants between the ages of 25 and 50, commented on these issues and revealed different interpretations of Periyar feminism and similarities and differences in their own life experiences. Their opinions were framed discursively by the context in which they were held: the school where these women work, study and live; and by the presence of Periyar female leaders, and a "Western" anthropologist. To summarize: discussion ranged from the importance of, and ambivalence towards, both caste and family, women's difficulties in managing family and work, the nature of male dominance in Indian society; and the impact of Westernization and the Western women's movement on Indian society. However, it is noteworthy that women focussed particularly on caste, family and the role models afforded to them. Moreover, their insights conveyed ambivalence towards or contradicted Periyar's ideology, in spite of their awareness of this ideology and the presence of female leaders.

For example, women countered Periyar's secular vision by arguing that it was not religion itself that was meaningful, but the family rituals and responsibilities that were tied to religious practice, that were of value. While Periyar preached "boldness," liberation from caste, and women to engage in paid work, family formed the anchor from which these women understood the dilemmas they face. How for example, can one continually "adjust" as they are expected to do? Many women sought practical advice on how one could manage conflicts with husbands and with in-laws or strategies they could use to change divisions of labour in the house that women were finding increasingly difficult to juggle.

One Hindu woman recounted the ostracism she faced for a decade or more when she married a Moslem. Now, she worried about the marriage prospects for her

son and the difficulties she faced in obtaining a good dowry. Women's opinions over domestic violence ranged from ambivalence, moral outrage, and amongst a few, older women, the view that wife beating, although a common problem, had to be suffered through. Blame was placed on husband and wife, the bad character of a family or the poorly arranged nature of the marital union.

Divorce was maligned by almost all participants, in favour of a permanent union of "one man, one woman." A more ambivalent attitude towards caste was reflected in the way most women argued that caste would, in some undetermined future, wither away. Yet, the same women affirmed its importance in the way marriage, family, and traditions were constituted, and its significance in their own social relations and their sense of "society." Many women acknowledge some value in allowing children to make their own marriage choices. However, the overwhelming attitude towards marriage was that it was best arranged through the mature benevolence of parents, an opinion supported by interviews which indicate that 90% of these women are or will be married in arranged, caste-based marriages. Such arrangements need not in theory be caste-based many argued, and would not be, in the next generation. Yet, only a small minority was prepared to consciously exercise more flexible marriage arrangements when asked to reflect as parents, upon the choices of their children.

This ambivalence towards caste, and the complexity of negotiating work with family was reflected in several other discussion groups and in the numerous personal narratives I recorded from women, the majority from the large, "backward caste" category, as well as some scheduled castes, and Moslem women. Themes included that of abandonment, difficulties in continuing their education, alcohol abuse, disputes over unsettled dowry, the unfair judgments applied by local caste organizations in settling family problems and the difficulties in juggling work with responsibilities and obligations in the household and larger extended family.

Elsewhere (George, 2002b), I examine the ambivalence of these women towards Periyar ideology, an opinion also reflected in the accounts of several POWER organizers. Consider B, a 35-year-old teacher who spent five weeks in Newfoundland where she learned how to organize contract training, prepare proposals, and learned about social problems and women's issues. Married to a man of the same caste who works as a professional, she resides with him, two daughters and mother-in-law who, with the help of a day servant, takes care of the children and domestic duties. Although B empha-

sizes that her husband is supportive, she is also aware that the division of labour is unequal as husbands mostly contribute by chopping vegetables and going to market with or without their children. Schedules vary only marginally in the routines women like B recounted, who begins her day by preparing breakfast and lunch at 5 a.m. B leaves for work at 7:30 and returns by 6:00 or 6:30, when she dons her "nightie" to relax, make "tiffen" with her mother-in-law, and help her daughters with their studies, until bedtime at around 10 p.m. Her working day from 8:00 until 5:00 as a teacher at the school is longer than that of her husband who works from 10:00 to 4:00. She notes, "the wife prepares; the husbands sit. He can't make tea or coffee. He rises at 6:00 or 6:30, reads the newspaper, and returns home earlier from work. There are three children waiting for me when I get home! Sometimes, I have tension."

Raised in an affluent, propertied family, she talks about the importance of caste and the arrangement of marriage:

> Caste is important but it is also changing. We like to be in the same community (caste group) but if it is inter-caste, that too is O.K. Parents are 100% involved. They look after their children. The problems with a love marriage are that the parents are not convinced especially if the marriage is with someone outside the community. Parents are concerned that daughters have the right partner. In Newfoundland, divorce was very common. That is not possible here.

While she enjoys teaching and working with students, B says, "there is no time to look after the children. I had three months maternity leave, and now during the working hours I worry about my daughter. There is no time to spend with her and my husband has more free time. He's fine, (as a husband) but I am not free."

Similar experiences were recounted by S, another participant in POWER. S is a 37-year-old mother of one daughter who lives with her husband, a doctor and at different times, with relatives from both her own and her husband's family. On the matter of marriage:

> If she (her daughter) selects someone then that will be a relief, but before that we must direct her. At adolescence, we can have an influence but it is less likely we can stop them in their decisions after they reach 25. We have to look for a boy if she doesn't find one, but this will not be until she is educated and has a job.

Although S claims "caste will change," when asked if inter-caste marriage is acceptable for her children, she

says, "Inter-caste marriage is not a problem, but I have to think about it." What seems far more acceptable is a loosening of caste boundaries, particularly distinctions between subcaste groups and greater flexibility. This is echoed by *M* another member of POWER who also spent five weeks in Newfoundland:

> It was a shock for us to learn how common divorce was, and that children were not with both parents; also the more frequent changing of partners; here in India, one man, one woman is predominant. My husband is from the same community (caste group) but I knew nothing of his family. I was afraid most of the time during my early marriage and I was separate from my family. Only after I had two sons did I gain confidence. It took years for me to adjust. I felt like a stranger. But we have to adjust. From birth there is the notion that we have to adjust. Some women are moving away from that. But divorce will not happen here (in India). Women suffer a lot; but they won't leave. We have to think about society, how society will laugh and ridicule us here. We have to have a practical attitude. We say, "I'm entering this marriage and this is what I have to do." Even though he's a drunkard, a woman would not leave.

In these individual, personal narratives, caste-based arranged marriage and divisions of labour in the household formed a constant in relation to changes in other living and working arrangements including an increase in women's mobility and education. Women acknowledged the problems associated with caste, dowry and marriage arrangements and supported the notion that they be overturned. In individual interviews, however, they were more reluctant to dismiss these norms when asked how they would choose to deal with their own sons and daughters (cf. Subrahmanian, 1993: 218-236).

In sum, a critical discourse on gender emerged in all three types of narratives discussed above, in that gender inequality, that is, the source and character of female subordination and male privilege informed the way women's struggles, social problems and experiences were talked about. The stories differ however, in the extent to which they were informed by a self-identified feminism and Periyar ideology.

The narratives that informed the public celebration of Periyar and POWER reinforced the focus of women and Dravidian oppression on Brahminism and Hinduism. In this analysis, women's subordination is rooted in religious dogmatism and the four *Varna* in which castes are hierarchically arranged. Emancipation in the form of "empowerment" will occur by women's entry into the paid workforce and volunteer work that will give her the confidence to "come out." While indirect reference to "feminism" was conveyed by for example, by invoking Simone de Beauvoir, feminism was more explicitly, and extensively referred to in the largely female-attended workshops.

Women, both in the dialogue generated by the workshops and in personal interviews, conveyed disagreement towards some of the movement's ideology, focussed on the family as a source of inequality and sought practical solutions. Their ambivalence toward family, caste and dowry however, reveals both their investments in these social networks and its importance for their identity.

For example, while dialogue in the workshop generated critical reflection, overtime, opinion shifted so that more than half in the group turned to an affirmation of caste, family, and the importance of a well arranged marriage. These practices were defended as aspects of "our culture" and were perceived as both the roots of difficulty and of their "protection," including their sense of security and identity. Women readily acknowledged the complex hierarchies that persist within specific caste groups, amongst Scheduled Caste Christians, and lower and higher Backward castes. Moreover, women individually also criticized the school itself, which some felt, pressured them into volunteer work and did not sufficiently address the difficulties women faced in meeting a triple workload.

This ambivalence is particularly important to capture as an expression of the culturally specific ways in which women are situated in relations of power, constraint and also, privilege to engender critical perspectives in which the movement (the DK and Periyar feminism) itself, as an employer, an agent of power, a disciplinary entity, is also included.

For example, although a few men attended the first hour of one workshop, the only men present during these events were school officials who attended to officially complete the event. One commented that it was important for women to demonstrate their "power" through commitment to the volunteer activities associated with the school. He then asked female participants to comment on the workshop. When met with dead silence, he requested that each stand up, one by one to offer an opinion. This prompted a second, and respected elder male to rise and admonish the women for failing to speak out. "What," he asked rhetorically, "is the solution to overcoming women's inequality?" "You must take your own power. It is your responsibility. It will not be given to you by we men!" He added that women must

rise as leaders at the school; they must "make claims" to their husbands—that they need time for their responsibilities at work; they need to travel in their activities.

Once these men left a few women who remained, including one of the guest speakers, expressed their ambivalence about the workshop. They noted how the intense discussion by women during the day contrasted with the "top-down" "hierarchical" and "coercive" style that ended the event and rendered these same women mute.

This incident reflected the focus on "coming out" as a way for women to make change, an orientation that was prevalent amongst POWER leaders also. It was also reflected in the call to "relinquish caste," by *B*, a feminist speaker at the workshop. Rather than placing responsibility for change on individual woman, women's "fear," "self-consciousness" and reluctance to initiate changes may also reflect their understanding of the larger structures at play in Tamil society. Female teachers are well promoted, encouraged and rewarded for volunteer work and for continuing their education. At the same time, chastity remains an important feminine virtue that, in spite of Periyar's declarations in the school hallways, is reinforced at the school. A well-secured gate ensures that men do not enter without just cause and the mobility and comportment of girls is well monitored by teachers and staff. So, to what extent does Periyar feminism reproduce and challenge social inequalities at play in Tamil society?

Reproducing and Challenging Caste and Gender

Periyar's social and political ideology was considered radical during the pre-independence period. As leader of the "Self respect movement" in the 1930s, Periyar advocated the arrangement of "self-respect marriages." This position did not, however, reflect solidarity with prominent Western feminists, such as Annie Besant, a well-known suffragette, because her fight for women's emancipation and support for Indian independence valorized Brahmin ideology. (Sinha, 1994: 25-28) and marginalized lower caste groups (Anandhi, 1997: 196; Veeramani, 1992: 8-12). Forbes (1996: 73-76) argues that the focus of the "self respect" movement on women's issues inhibited the formation of autonomous women's movements in the region. The effect was to create some space for the expression of women's issues which were increasingly marginalized and subsumed by the politicization and splits within the Dravidian movement and its quest for broad political support (Forbes, 1996: 73-76).

It has been argued that the Dravidian nationalist movement released caste somewhat from religion, and yet its focus on anti-Brahminism created a caste-based consciousness, where caste was displaced by casteism, and now underpins the way Hindu Tamils from the "Backward Castes" form alliances, and negotiate modernity (Barnett, 1976; Beteille, 1996: 163-67 Bhai, 1992). In Tamil Nadu today, caste remains a central social and political force, exemplified in occasional displays of inter caste violence and in the jockeying for power of caste based elites. Moreover, castes which fall within the "Backward" category are increasingly differentiated in a way that cross cuts class relations, to position some as landowners who profited from the Green revolution style growth of the region, and industrialists while others figure amongst the landless and unemployed poor (Gough, 1989). Dravidian cultural nationalism, therefore is, potentially both reactionary or progressive (Barnett, 1976: 3-24); it has both fostered critical political participation, buttressed the expansion of political power among elites and supported racially rooted oppositions which pit Aryan, Brahmin and North Indians against Dravidian, non-Brahmin Tamils (Dirks, 1996: 269-270).

Moreover, both critics and supporters of Tamil cultural nationalism argue that, over time, women have been subsumed in the expression of Tamil regionalist identity in the political arena and in dominant cultural representations, such as Tamil films conveying nationalist themes (Geetha, 1991; Pandian, Anandhi and Venkatachalapthy, 1991: 1059-1062). As in other dominant nation building discourses in India and elsewhere, (cf Heng, 1997: 31; Rao, 1999) they are depicted according to normative gender scripts: as mothers, as good observers of family planning or as goddesses signifying chastity, purity and feminine self-sacrifice to the service of regional social and political exigencies. The focus of the Dravidian movement on *Tamilttaay*, a female personification of the Tamil language, parallels the representation of India as *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) to reinforce these dominant images of Tamil femininity in the service of Tamil nationalism (Ramaswamy, 2001: 20).

At the same time, to focus on such dominant scripts is to offer limited insights into the way POWER incorporates women and gender issues into its agenda and tends to simplify differences within Dravidian social and political arenas. Periyar continues to symbolize a critical path in the broader field of Tamil Nadu politics where several Dravidian parties jockey for state power and take positions which seem to contradict the movements original principles, such as one Dravidian party's sup-

port for the BJP, a Hindu fundamentalist party. The DK maintains relationships with many political parties and considers itself to be a "watchdog," to quote its chairman, over national and state level initiatives. It conveys a strong regionalist identity which is critical of the growing power of Hindu fundamentalist politics, and, like many other regional and caste-based movements in India, the power of a central government which is perceived to be dominated by north Indian interests. This critique of nation building supports Dravidian regionalism, and continues to inform the way women are positioned to participate in the movement.

Periyar narratives do permit women to reflect on the significance of caste in their identity formation and in marking their bodies as inferior. Yet, the focus of Periyar feminism on a simplified, pan-Indian schema based on the four *Varna* belies the complex hierarchies that exist within Tamil Nadu (cf. Dirks, 1996; 281-284; Gupta, 2000) and the way women position themselves in this process. This is exemplified in the metaphor of caste difference that underpins Pineapples and Oranges, the activity that introduced this paper. The focus of Pineapples and Oranges on women's subordination in Hinduism and Brahmin dominance offers a partial analysis for understanding the experience of some women.

However, differences between non-Brahmin Tamil women are not addressed as evidenced in Pineapples and Oranges, by the absence of Christian, Moslem and *Dalit* women from the game, and by the undercutting of class relations as a source of gender exploitation. Students and teachers are *distinct* from other Tamil women in terms of class relations, and economic and social status and opportunities. Staff and students are well educated and many, but not all students are expected or at least hope to work in the paid workforce before and after marriage. As teachers, they are privileged in relation to the *Dalit* and Backward caste servers and sweepers at the school as well as women from nearby villages who wait for "daily wages" in fields and in construction.

Differences between women are reflected in women's labour force participation rate in Tamil Nadu which has increased over the last 30 years, in both rural and urban areas, from 46.48% to 54% in 1993 in rural areas, and from 32.05% to 40.2% in 1993, in urban areas (Government of Tamil Nadu, 1997: 193-202). This includes an increase in their formal sector participation, from 14.6% in 1970 to 28.1% in 1996. This is higher than the All-India rate, although the socio-economic profile of Tamil Nadu suggests high rates of poverty and displays the highest composite index of urbanization (Savitri, 1994: 1850).

Periyar feminists challenge the persistence of caste

structures and current gender relations, and intercaste marriage is encouraged. However, the relationship between caste and reproductive practices, including marriage, chastity and sexuality, are not formally addressed in public narratives. This is perhaps, because as Ram argues, reformist organizations seek to contain the effects of change which "might fundamentally destabilize the central figure of the chaste mother-wife" (Ram, 1995: 316). Control over women's sexuality and reproduction remains an important means of reproducing caste. A focus on these matters would test the reformist and critical edge of this social movement and potentially pit it against social forces that seek to protect caste difference in Tamil Nadu.

Some studies suggest that the uneven and accelerated urbanization and the upward mobility of lower caste groups in Tamil Nadu has generated a shift toward emulating north Indian practices, particularly of dowry, son preference and a decline in matri-lateral marriage ties (Kapadia, 1993; Basu, 1999). Moreover, women are currently bombarded with an array of contradictory, yet powerful discourses, ranging from scientific, psychological, and the persistence of Tamil classicism (Ram, 1995: 316). These mixed messages combine with the difficulties of juggling paid work with mothering and the expectations of the movement itself. The movement then, offers a very partial script on which women might act to effect change.

This does not mean that POWER members are unaware of these limitations. As one POWER member argued, in the absence of "alternative structures," effective protection and substantive access to legal rights in terms of property and divorce, it is difficult to imagine what living differently might look like, outside of caste and marriage. In fact, the discrepancy between women's approach to caste, and the anti-caste rhetoric of the movement is as I have suggested, related to the privileges these women gain from their participation in caste and the social and economic security it provides.

Yet, this privilege should be viewed in a context where women remain excluded from property ownership. It has been noted that women often relinquish property rights upon marriage in exchange for their dowries, even though the latter is officially illegal (Whitehead, Bannerji, Mojab, 2001: 13). The constraints this places on women was also reflected in an interview I conducted with a prominent lawyer and member of the DK. He argued that law in India and Tamil Nadu had significantly improved women's situation. Yet, he acknowledged that he handles many property and dowry disputes, some of them on behalf of wid-

ows (also see Agarwal, 1998), most of them initiated by married women who are seeking family property to which they are legally entitled. These disputes he claimed, however are rarely instituted by the woman herself, but often by her husband and his family.

At the same time, at the Polytechnic, a woman centred discourse is emergent in several ways including increased attention to violence against women in Tamil Nadu and through the development of a "women's studies" curriculum. Moreover, through exchanges Periyar feminists learn to develop workshops, as storytelling contexts. The workshop provided a social space for the emergence of critical perspectives that attends to the dilemmas and contradictions in women's lives. Feminist conscious raising strategies were both culturally specific and yet distinct from normative methods of addressing an audience through formal lecture and speeches. This allowed women to consider the complex dilemmas they face, to confront, affirm and negotiate their cultural identities and expose the limitations of the movement itself. It remains to be seen however, whether such workshops, performed in the confines of the movement and the walls of its school, will provide the alternate structures that are needed. The formation of POWER itself is one initiative that Periyar feminists argue might permit greater flexibility than the school setting can provide.

Yet, change is advocated as a slow, culturally sensitive process. This makes it crucial to track the way POWER, as an NGO, not just a women's organization, incorporates a wider range of women into its structure and development initiatives, a topic I address elsewhere, (George, 2002a). Periyar was considerably ambivalent about British rule, which he perceived to be a counterpoint to Brahmin dominance. He selectively embraced Westernization, as much in response to changes and difference within India, as to the place of India in a global context. In a similar vein, feminism, selectively deployed, may be a way in which the DK positions itself as reformist and critical towards Indian nation building and Tamil regionalism.

Feminism in Transnational Practice: Situating the Ethnographer

Visweswaran's (1997: 592-593) call for feminist anthropologists to assume a position of "disidentification" in their analysis of women's experience and gender relations is useful only if we draw upon it as a provisional starting point. Indeed, this orientation directed me to analytically parse my previous analysis of feminism and women's organization in Newfoundland from the

dynamics of feminism, gender and caste I observed in Tamil Nadu. At the same time, feminist anthropologists had already problematized the insider/outsider relationship to explore the dynamics of gender and cultural production and the negotiation of power as it is produced and encoded within and beyond the field (Enslin, 1994; George, 2000; Wolf, 1996). My participation in the workshops which I cannot detail here, broadened the field of conversation to include comparisons with women's lives in the West, a perspective that was also revealed above by POWER members', reflections on Newfoundland. The analysis this interactive dynamic conveys can be even more important if we connect it to the wider interdisciplinary field and the political context of doing anthropology in a global context.

Feminists writing outside of anthropology, argue, that although a reformist, "engaged" activism, may depoliticize social issues, they also point to the fact that our analysis of feminism and its impact should not pit those who work within the system against those who take a more confrontational approach (Miller and Razavi, 1998: 2-6). Rather, the focus should be on the articulation of these different actors, in contest and alliance, and on the "contested nature of rules and discursive practices/gender" (Prugle and Meyer, 1999: 5).

My exploration here, of different narrative contexts, is an attempt to capture, however partially, these complex dynamics where women are implicated in both feminism and a social movement that bears a legacy of nationalist mobilization, but which reproduces and may even support current expressions of caste and regional identity. And yet, by distinguishing different narrative contexts, discursive ruptures do appear in ways that bring to the surface a range of inequalities and dilemmas women experience. The absence of class relations from the picture of oppression, however, which is a more general trend in Tamil Nadu itself (Dickey, 2000: 464) necessitates a broader analytical scope.

By researching an organization that explicitly drew upon feminism, albeit selectively, I sought to avoid labeling it as feminist in advance and yet, perhaps reified the organization itself as a focus for study. It is only when I remove the boundary marker, "women's organization," from the analysis that I broaden even further the "social field" (Edelman, 2000: 310) to apprehend the complex ways in which women reproduce and challenge the inequalities and privileges in which they are embedded.

As an NGO, POWER assumes a different guise as a service provider, supporter and critic of government policy, and client of international donors whose funds bring its members to Canada. This widens the scope beyond

Tamil Nadu to a broader global context where development and international governing policies and social movement activism coalesce. This is an obvious insight on one level. Yet, it bears tracking in specific social settings, particularly in a climate where engagement and reform may in fact prevail as women's organizations expand in their scope, agenda, strategies and service provision (Miller and Razavi, 1998; Prugl and Meyer, 1999: 2-15). Anthropologists, drawing on a feminist practice approach are well positioned to occupy such spaces by providing a grounded analysis of discursive struggles and by tracing the movement of social actors, the anthropologist included, in alliances and networks (Edelman, 2000: 310-312; Fox and Stern, 1997: 9), that move beyond the boundaries of reformist organizations such as POWER.

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Notes

1 "Periyar feminism" is employed by female leaders of POWER, the women's organization, who have learned about and interpreted feminism through their involvement in various activities in Tamil Nadu, India and international fora, including exchanges in Canada. This research was funded by postdoctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

2 "Backward" Castes is the term commonly used at the Polytechnic (see note 9).

3 For example, Stephens, 1997; essays in *Feminist Fields*, 1999; Barillas; Ertiz; Judd.

4 For this paper I refer to Ramasamy as he is known at the school, as "Periyar."

5 Studies that address tensions between women-centred issues, states and related social movements: for example, Guerrero, 1997; West, 1997; Basu, 1995; Trask, 1996; Anandhi, 1997; Ray, 1999; John, 2001; through case studies within anthropology, Stephens, 1997; Ertem, 1999; Judd, 1999.

6 This is an obvious point within feminist literature; see Narayan, 1997; Gedalof, 1999; Flew, 1999 for examples of more recent discussion, post Mohanty, 1991, in terms of social issues and exclusions in a transnational, postcolonial context; Prugle and Meyer, 1999 re: producing agency in a development context; anthropology, Stephens, 1997: 4-11 on feminist consciousness.

7 Another way for example, is through a transnational comparative perspective of specific gendered social issues; e.g. Panjabi, 1997; Narayan, 1997; 81-119.

8 Government of Tamil Nadu, *An Economic Appraisal*, 1996-7: 211.

9 Backward Castes represent a mix of lower- and middle-caste groups which were non-Brahmin, loosely classified as *Shudras* in the emerging, turn-of-the-century British classification system. These groups have increased from 11 groups in 1883 to 323, in 1988 (*Economic and Political Weekly*, March 10, 1990: 515).

10 The "myths of Manu" refers to the *Manusmriti*, a religio-legal text describing duties of different social groups. This text, particularly its attention to the conduct of Brahmins, the polluting nature of women and de-valuation of lower caste groups, formed a focus for interpreting the victimization of Non-Brahmins even in the earliest phase of the movement (Irschick, 1969: 46).

11 This paper focusses on these gender workshops with staff in particular, but supplementary insights derive from my participation in several other workshops and discussion groups with over 150 students aged 18 to 25 and from discussion groups in three villages which are not examined here. Also, structured interviews were conducted with 101 persons, 84 women and 17 men. Most of these persons were from the Backward caste category. A small sample consisted of Scheduled Caste persons, most of whom were Christian, and worked as sweepers and servers at the school, or as housekeepers. A few were Moslem.

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Maisons de prêt sur gage en Chine : un visite de Chongqing

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Résumé : La résurgence des maisons de prêt sur gage en Chine n'est pas la simple résurrection d'un passé volontiers honni par la vulgate communiste. Elle est le fruit d'une certaine renaissance aujourd'hui de la société civile tout autant que celui d'une acceptation par le gouvernement chinois d'avoir à composer avec la réalité économique et sociale, que celui encore d'une recherche de solutions aux dysfonctionnements du système financier bureaucratique. C'est pourquoi les maisons de prêt sur gage que nous allons visiter à Chongqing offrent-elles une image mariant tradition et modernité, ouverture et conservatisme, substitution et complémentarité, prospérité et dénuement.

Mots-clés : Chine, économie, prêts, communisme, tradition, modernité

Abstract: The reappearance of pawnshops in China is not the mere resurrection of a past gladly spurned by the Communist Vulgate. It is the result of a revival of civil society as much as an acceptance by the Chinese Government to come to terms with economic and social reality as well as a search for solutions to the dysfunctions of the bureaucratic financial system. This is why the pawnshops that we are going to visit in Chongqing present an image combining tradition and modernity, liberalism and conservatism, substitution and complementarities, prosperity and poverty.

Keywords: China, economy, loans, communism, tradition, modernity

Introduction

J'ai mené une entreprise d'exploration des activités micro-financières en Chine à partir de quelques clairières de défrichement comme les tontines, les cassettes privées (*sifangqian* 私房錢) et plus récemment les maisons de prêt sur gage qui ont resurgi en Chine populaire. Mon approche de ces institutions, longtemps bannies, sera ici moins historique, moins économique que culturelle en ce sens qu'elle s'attachera à décrire un certain nombre de pratiques dont l'émergence manifeste d'une certaine reviviscence de la société civile. Que nous apprend l'image que se donnent ou veulent se donner les maisons de prêt sur gage aujourd'hui ressuscitées?

Les études un peu étoffées de ce phénomène font défaut. Aussi, dans ma première exploration de ce thème (Pairault, 2002), ai-je été amené à utiliser les données accessibles sur le site ouvert à l'adresse http://www. pawn.com.cn dont le nom chinois (*Zhongguo diandang wang* 中国典当网) se traduit par «Réseau du prêt sur gage en Chine». Ce site est une émanation du Comité spécial panchinois du prêt sur gage (*Quanguo diandang zhuanye weiyuanhui* 全国典当专业委员会) qui a été créé en octobre 1998 à l'initiative de plusieurs maisons de prêt sur gage – et sans doute avec le soutien des autorités chinoises – pour favoriser l'application des nouvelles dispositions réglementaires édictées par la réforme de 1998[1]. Le Réseau du prêt sur gage en Chine publie électroniquement des informations sur l'évolution de sa branche d'activités. Initialement, ces informations prenaient la forme de bulletins désignés sous le titre générique d'«Actualité du prêt sur gage» (*Diandang Xinxi* 典当信息). Même si ces premiers documents ne sont plus directement accessibles aujourd'hui, ce site accomplit un travail considérable permettant autant la centralisation d'informations factuelles (le plus souvent reprises de la presse économique) que celle de textes réglementaires s'appliquant aux maisons de prêt sur gage. Il s'est donc révélé une base de données incompa-

rable d'autant qu'il m'a toujours été possible de vérifier les renseignements colligés, soit que l'on puisse les recouper avec d'autres sources, soit que l'on puisse les retrouver sous leur forme originale – comme les règlements, circulaires et autres documents légaux émis par les différentes administrations centrales ou provinciales chinoises. Outre le récolement de ces informations littérales, j'ai entrepris la collection de photographies présentant la vie des maisons de prêts sur gages de la Municipalité de Chongqing; ce sont ces instantanés dus à Arnaud Heckmann qui guideront cette présentation[2].
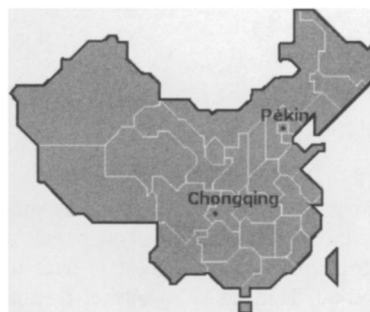
Chongqing et les maisons de prêt sur gage

Situé au confluent du fleuve Yangzi et de la rivière Jialing dans le sud-ouest de la Chine, la ville de Chongqing est un ancien centre d'échanges commerciaux du bassin du Sichuan qui a été aménagé en une vaste base du complexe militaro-industriel mis en place à l'époque maoïste. Négligée ensuite au cours de vingt premières années de la réforme économique, elle retrouve une importance nouvelle quand le gouvernement chinois entend à la fin des années 1990 définir une stratégie de réorientation des flux financiers vers les zones délaissées de l'occident chinois. Un des principaux objectifs est alors de relier Shanghai aux pays du haut Yangzi et aux provinces du sud-ouest grâce au formidable axe de communication que constitue le fleuve Bleu. Désormais perçue comme la future métropole au centre de cette stratégie, les autorités centrales décide en juin 1997 de séparer la ville de Chongqing de la province du Sichuan, d'étendre son territoire administratif et de la constituer, au même titre que Pékin, Shanghai, et Tianjin, en une municipalité dépendant directement du gouvernement central[3] (cf. carte 1).

La vitalité de Chongqing explique qu'elle recense une trentaine de maisons de prêt sur gage (environ 3% du total chinois), ce qui la place devant les autres municipalités autonomes puisque Pékin n'en compte que quatre, Shanghai douze et Tianjin vingt-trois. Au sommet de la vague, Chongqing en a même dénombré 134; c'est la grande purge de 1996 qui a ramené ce chiffre au niveau actuel. Ces officines sont pour un grand nombre d'entre elles situées dans le centre de la ville, (*Yuzhong qu* 渝中区) et leur enseigne traditionnelle, sur laquelle est écrit le caractère *dang* 當, les signale aux passants. C'est encore avec une relative discrétion que la maison de prêt sur gage de la Paix véritable (*Zheng'An diandanghang* 正安典当行) se manifeste au coin de l'avenue de la Démocratie (*Minquan lu* 民权路) juste en face du grand hôtel de Chongqing (photo 1).

Ce caractère *dang* exprime classiquement le nantissement de biens réels; il conserve sur les enseignes sa graphie classique et s'écrit 當 et non 当. C'est donc bien un retour à des formes traditionnelles de financement que semble vouloir ainsi manifester la résurgence des maisons de prêt sur gage en dépit de la volonté officielle de rebaptiser ces officines. Dans la langue ordinaire, les Chinois parlent de *dangpu* 当铺 (boutique de prêt sur gage) pour désigner ces commerces. Toutefois, un règlement d'août 1996 impose, du moins dans le jargon bureaucratique, le recours au néologisme *diadang hang* 典当行 (métier du prêt sur gage) – construit sur le modèle de l'expression chinoise désignant les banques à l'«occidentale» (*yin hang* 银行, métier de l'argent) – pour donner une apparence plus moderne à cette vieille activité (Pairault, 2002 : 32-33).

Carte 1: Chine et Chongqing.

Les maisons de prêt sur gage entre «tradition» et «modernisation»

L'image que veulent combattre tant les patrons de maisons de prêt sur gage que le gouvernement chinois lui-même pour justifier les uns comme l'autre cette renaissance est celle qu'illustre cette photo prise à Shanghai au début du siècle dernier (photo 2). Face au caractère *dang* reproduit sur un gigantesque paravent dissimulant l'entrée d'une officine de prêt sur gage, un homme, tête basse, porte un paquet enveloppant quelques maigres possessions qu'il compte gager en échange d'une avance. Contrairement aux autres commerces, dans lesquels le client manifeste son aisance en versant de l'argent au marchand, ici il révèle sa pauvreté, d'où ce sentiment d'humiliation, de perte de face, de culpabilité qu'il peut ressentir. Aujourd'hui, nous dit-on, est passé le temps du vieillard presbyte aux lunettes tombées sur le bout de son nez, ne levant pas les yeux sur le client entré honteusement son petit paquet sous le bras; au contraire le regard doit être clair, franc, direct et évaluateur. À Canton, Wu Xiaoling 伍小玲 répond aux archétypes les plus modernes afin de tranquilliser la clientèle; gérante de la maison de prêt sur gage *Longévité* 長壽典當行, elle a été nommée en avril 2000 «travailleur modèle» par la

ville de Canton, de surcroît elle assume également la fonction de Secrétaire du Parti de son entreprise[4]. Désormais c'est entendu, les maisons de prêt sur gage n'assisteront plus des pauvres hères désargentés mais procureront des fonds de roulement à d'honorables «hommes d'affaires». Pour assumer leur «nouvelle» mission, les officines jouent l' «ouverture».

C'est d'abord l'ouverture à la lumière comme le proclame ces portes ouvertes, ces guirlandes, ces bouquets offerts pour la cérémonie d'inauguration de cette nouvelle maison de prêt sur gage *Tongdao* 同道 (c'est-à-dire «nous irons ensemble»); c'est aussi l'entrée dans le monde moderne comme le révèlent la construction toute neuve, la porte de garage et l'appareil de climatisation. (photo 3). Cette «modernité» est encore affirmée par le décor intérieur résolument contemporain, étalant les signes extérieurs d'une nouvelle richesse; on n'oublie pas pour autant les références à la culture chinoise traditionnelle. Ainsi, la maison de prêt sur gage *Yucai* 渝財 (Éternelle richesse), dans un décor de marbres, de spots lumineux, de plantes vertes, appose sur une cloison, de couleur dorée, la figure stylisée d'une sapèque – ronde avec un trou carré (photo 4).

Les bureaux de ses employés offrent le même contraste. Meubles de bureaux modernes et ordinateurs, autel où règne une divinité protectrice ressuscitée après cinquante années de maoïsme (photo 5). Le style «établissement bancaire sérieux» est parfois aussi très prisé comme par la maison de prêt sur gage *Hengli* 恒利 (Éternels profits) qui orne son comptoir de vitres protectrices (photo 6), d'autres même utilisent des grilles.

Tous ces détails expriment une bataille que se sont livrée les maisons de prêt sur gage et le système bancaire classique. Bataille pour avoir les mêmes prérogatives que les banques puis pour gager titres et immeubles. Initialement les maisons de prêt sur gage avaient le statut d'«institutions financières spéciales» (*tesu jinrong jigou* 特殊金融機構) sous la tutelle de la banque centrale chinoise. Elles étaient donc des institutions financières non bancaires, à ce titre elles étaient autorisées à prêter sur gage (biens meubles exclusivement) mais non à recevoir des dépôts ou encore à octroyer des prêts chirographaires. Elles n'ont eu de cesse qu'elles puissent déborder ce cadre et octroyèrent des prêts en acceptant le nantissement de biens-fonds ou encore de titres. Là où elles existaient les maisons de prêt sur gage exercèrent une pression concurrentielle telle sur le système bancaire que le gouvernement chinois dut intervenir. En août 2000, les maisons de prêt sur gage perdent leur statut d'institutions financières et sont placées sous la tutelle, non de la banque centrale, mais de la Commission d'État à l'économie et au commerce. C'est une victoire à la Pyrrhus pour

le système bancaire. Certes les banques se sont débarrassées d'un concurrent encombrant. Certes les maisons de prêt sur gage ont perdu leur statut d'établissement financier. Ces déboires seront plus que compensés par les avantages qui sont obtenus dans l'année qui suit car selon le statut édicté en 2001 les maisons de prêt sur gage peuvent accepter des biens meubles et des droits incorporels pour sûretés des prêts qu'elles octroient, ainsi que des biens-fonds en garantie hypothécaire de leurs prêts. La victoire des professionnels du prêt sur gage n'est toutefois pas totale : l'ouverture de compte de dépôts ainsi que l'octroi de crédits chirographaires leur restent toujours interdits. Ce pari d'honorabilité gagné, patrons et clients osent, quelquefois, se laisser surprendre par l'appareil photo comme ici à l'officine de la Triple harmonie, *Sanhe* 三和, où une jeune femme vient très ouvertement recourir aux services d'un prêteur sur gage. La calligraphie accrochée derrière le comptoir se lit *tian di ren he* 天地人和 : la triple harmonie entre le Ciel, la Terre et l'Homme (photo 7).

Les maisons de prêt sur gage entre substitution et complémentarité

Malgré leurs différents quant à leurs prérogatives réciproques, maisons de prêt sur gage et banques semblent indissolublement liées. Je rappellerai que les grandes banques chinoises sont des banques d'État essentiellement chargées de mettre en œuvre la politique de développement économique prônée par le gouvernement central. Les établissements financiers commandités par des capitaux privés restent l'exception, encore que nombre d'entre eux soient de fait des émanations de banques d'État cherchant à acquérir quelque souplesse de fonctionnement et, partant, à étendre leurs services.

Cette complémentarité ne peut être mieux illustrée (photo 8) que par la cohabitation en un même immeuble – situé avenue Sun Yatsen (*Zhongshan san lu* 中山三路) – de l'une des quatre grandes banques d'État chinoises, la Banque des communications (*Jiaotong yinhang* 交通银行), et de la maison de prêt sur gage «Au bonheur d'argent» (*Yinji diandang hang* 银吉典当行). En haut à droite de la photo, sur l'enseigne verticale, apparaissent les quatre caractères chinois signalant la banque; en bas, toujours en blanc sur fond bleu, l'enseigne horizontale attire l'attention sur l'officine de prêt. Pour l'instant c'est l'heure de la fermeture, toutefois celle-ci n'est que partielle. Le guichet qui apparaît dans le rideau de fer de l'une des deux portes n'est que la forme pré-moderne du distributeur automatique de billets dans un pays où ceux-ci sont rares et où l'usage de carte bancaire peu répandu. Et ainsi que le précise l'enseigne, le service est assuré 24 heures sur 24, *ershisi xiaoshi fuwu* 二十四小时服务, le

numéro de téléphone est de surcroît clairement indiqué (photo 9). Il en fut de même à Taiwan il y a quelques années avant la généralisation des distributeurs automatiques de billets, les officines de prêt sur gage, ici aussi ouvertes 24 heures sur 24, avançaient les liquidités que réclamait tel ou tel hôpital public avant d'accueillir un malade même en urgence. Les maisons de prêt sur gage ont toujours joué un rôle informel de substitution quand les institutions financières formelles se montraient impuissantes à assumer leurs fonctions (Pairault, 1999).

Le soleil est couché, mais la porte contiguë à la banque reste ouverte (photo 10). Les panneaux annonçant les horaires d'ouverture (à gauche en vert pour l'officine, à droite et en bleu pour la banque) se répondent et soulignent mieux encore les différences de services: sans interruption pour l'une, limité et variable selon les saisons pour l'autre. Ce n'est pas un jugement mais une constatation car il y a souvent une division bien comprise du travail.

Au début des années 1990, les banques favorisèrent une spéculation effrénée en refinançant des sociétés de fiducie, aussi leur fut-il interdit de prêter pour financer de tels achats spéculatifs. Avec le développement du marché des valeurs mobilières, le gouvernement chinois est amené à assouplir sa position afin de faciliter le travail des maisons de courtage; c'est pourquoi il autorise la Banque populaire de Chine à édicter, en février 2000, des règles très strictes permettant à ces maisons de courtage – et à elles seules – de donner en gage des titres aux banques afin que ces dernières leurs prêtent les fonds de roulement dont elles pouvaient avoir momentanément besoin. Ces dispositions n'autorisaient donc pas les particuliers (comme personne privée ou comme entrepreneur individuel) à bénéficier d'une telle prestation car la règle reste que les institutions financières ne doivent pas alimenter la spéculation en Bourse.

Parfaitement au fait de cette situation et profitant de la perte du statut d'institution financière des maisons de prêt sur gage, une officine de Chongqing déjà évoquée plus haut, «Éternelle richesse», s'est alliée en décembre 2000 avec deux maisons de courtage nommées l'une la Compagnie de courtage du Sud-ouest 西南證券公司, l'autre le réseau du Tigre volant 飛虎證券網 laquelle opère sur le Net sous le nom de *Fayhoo.com*. Cette seconde maison de courtage serait très largement financée par la première maison de courtage (la Compagnie de courtage du Sud-ouest) ainsi que par une banque d'État (la Banque chinoise pour la construction); quant à la maison de prêt sur gage elle serait, selon le journaliste Cheng Wei, elle aussi une émanation de la Compagnie de courtage du Sud-ouest. Ce montage permit alors à des personnes privées d'obtenir un prêt pour une durée de

trois mois dont le montant correspondait à 65 % de la valeur des titres déposés (Pairault, 2002 : 33-34).

Les éléments que je viens d'exposer contribuent tous à donner une image bien lisse, voire idyllique, des maisons de prêt sur gage à Chongqing et en Chine. Il semble toutefois que cette vision doive être nuancée.

Autres visages des maisons de prêt sur gage

Retournons avenue de la Démocratie, près du grand hôtel, où trône la maison de prêt sur gage de la Paix véritable. L'image de cette prospérité bien achalandée, «bon chic bon genre» pour tout dire, se fait brusquement beaucoup plus discrète. C'est bien plutôt le tableau d'un autrefois que les autorités proclament comme révolu que l'on entrevoit (photo 11). Certes l'image de ce père et de ses deux enfants qui s'apprêtent à franchir le seuil de l'officine ne donne pas le sentiment de cette indigence que l'on associe le plus souvent à la fréquentation de ce genre de commerce. L'échoppe à l'enseigne du «Neuf et du vieux» (*Xinjiu* 新旧) offre un visage encore plus médiocre (photo 12). Ici, l'activité de prêt sur gage semble accessoire puisqu'il faut franchir une pagaille de sous-vêtements à la vente pour, la porte du fond une fois franchie, accéder à l'antre du prêteur sur gage.

Là ce n'est plus un cadre dynamique digne d'une photo pour magazine «branché» qui nous accueille, mais un simple boutiquier qui semble, tout comme ses clients, lutter contre l'impécuniosité (photo 13). Malgré tout, il pose pour la photo tous les attributs de son pouvoir et de sa majesté opportunément visibles. Inquiétant est toutefois cet avis placardé en dessous de l'appareil de climatisation : «prière de vérifier sur place le bon aloi des billets, la porte une fois franchie, aucune réclamation ne sera acceptée» (*Chaopiao zhen wei qing dangmian shibie. Chumen, buren.* 钞票真伪请当面识别。出门不认。)

Les prêteurs sur gage et autres «usuriers» chinois sont rarement les fesse-mathieux de la littérature; ce peut même être l'inverse. Ainsi, au Shandong, M. Guo Zhi'an 郭治安 décide, après avoir manié trente ans durant la truelle, de se retirer à la fin des années 1980 et de vivre de ses rentes. Trouvant celles-ci bien maigres, il retire son capital de la banque et entreprend de le prêter aux gens de son entourage avec un intérêt mensuel de 2%. En 1989, il prête une importante somme d'argent à Guo Jingyong 郭敬勇 un client jusque-là fiable qui, retraité comme lui, entend se lancer dans la prospection de l'or. La recherche se révèle catastrophiquement infructueuse et laisse le vieil homme dans l'incapacité de rembourser ses dettes à Guo Zhi'an; désespéré et ayant perdu la face, Guo Jingyong ne voit qu'une seule issue, tuer son prêteur (Jiang, 1996 : 88-89).

1. L'enseigne de la maison de la Paix véritable

2. Shanghai autrefois (http://shanghai.online.sh.cn)

3. L'ouverture de la maison «Ensemble»

4. L'accueil de la maison «Éternelle richesse»

5. Les bureau de la maison «Éternelle richesse»

6. Les guichets de la maison «Éternels profits»

7. Cliente et patron

8. Une division du travail

9. Un distributeur de billets pré-moderne

10. La devanture de la maison «Au bonheur d'argent»

11. La devanture de la maison de la Paix véritable

16. À l'intérieur de la maison «Au bonheur d'argent»

12. La devanture de la maison «Du neuf et du vieux»

17. À l'intérieur de la maison de la Triple harmonie

13. Le patron de la maison «Du neuf et du vieux»

18. Maison de prêt sur gage d'autrefois

14. La maison «Pluie de prospérité» vue de l'extérieur

19. À l'intérieur de la maison de la Paix véritable

15. À l'intérieur de la maison «Pluie de prospérité»

Le dénuement transparaît également à travers la devanture de cette officine «Pluie de prospérité» (*Xinyu* 鑫雨). Ici les diverses inscriptions, apparaissant tant sur la vitrine que la façade, proclament que, outre le prêt sur gage, cet établissement pratique le dépôt-vente et peut servir de mandataire pour tout appareil ménager, ordinateur, bijou... Le chaland doit se convaincre qu'ici «on met la confiance au dessus de tout», *xinyu zhi shang* 信誉至上 (photo 14).

Une fois franchi le seuil, le décor confirme encore ce sentiment d'indigence (photo 15). Un certificat, accroché au mur juste à droite d'un calendrier, attire l'œil. Ce commerce, qui proclame cumuler des métiers légalement incompatibles (prêt sur gage, vente en consignation...), dispose véritablement d'une licence professionnelle spéciale (*tezhong hangye xukezheng* 特种行业许可证). Cet intitulé signale une licence d'exploitation octroyée antérieurement à la réforme de 2001; il n'y a pas lieu de nous étonner d'une absence d'actualisation puisque celle-ci était en cours à l'échelon national quand la photo a été prise. Ce fait nous force néanmoins à nous souvenir des règles antérieures de création d'une maison de prêt sur gage : constituer une SARL et réunir un capital social de 5 000 000 de *yuan* (535 000 €) détenu à 75 % au moins par des personnes morales[5]. L'importance des chiffres et des contraintes (le capital social représente 800 fois la consommation annuelle d'un citadin de Chongqing) laisse supposer que ces maisons de prêt sur gage appartiennent toutes à des réseaux qu'une simple exploration photographique ne saurait révéler et, donc, que l'attribution des licences peut répondre à des critères autres que ceux proclamés par les textes réglementaires en vigueur.

Les gages

Ainsi que nous avons déjà eu l'occasion de le noter, le caractère *dang* 當 indique que la fonction des maisons de prêt sur gage est de prêter en échange du nantissement d'un bien meuble à condition que ce nantissement s'accompagne d'une dépossession du bien – dépôt chez le créancier gagiste – sans pour autant que ce dernier puisse en avoir l'usufruit. Dans d'autres hypothèses, le créancier gagiste aura l'usufruit du gage, le bénéfice qu'il en tire constituant l'intérêt du prêt au débiteur gageur. Dans d'autres hypothèses encore, il n'y aura pas dépossession, comme dans le cas d'un crédit hypothécaire. Dans d'autres hypothèses enfin, les gages pourront être constitués par des biens immobiliers ou des droits incorporels, deux formules qu'a finalement concédées la réforme de 2001. Nos photos ne nous donnent qu'une idée très limitée des gages effectivement déposés ainsi que des gages non réclamés mis à la vente.

Que l'on revisite l'officine «Au bonheur d'argent» (photo 16), celle de la Triple Harmonie (photo 17)... on ne peut qu'être frappé par la présence de bacs pleins de vêtements et autres produits de l'industrie textile. Cela renvoie une image qui rappelle le début du siècle dernier quand les indigents venaient gager leur hardes en l'échange de quelques sous : derrière la brouette on devine une échoppe de prêt sur gage au plafond de laquelle pendent des vêtements gagés et non réclamés (photo 18). Mais le nombre des objets identiques suggère bien plutôt la faillite de quelque micro-entreprise dont les stocks mis en vente doivent servir à repayer ses dettes. Le *South China Morning Post* du 11 mars 1999 rapporte ainsi que, dans la ville de Canton, un lot de 3 000 réveille-matin, gagés pour trois *yuan* la pièce, ont été mis en vente à un *yuan* après que l'entreprise ait fait faillite!

La maison de prêt sur gage de la Paix véritable offre un aperçu plus varié (photo 19) : tableaux de «grands maîtres» (à gauche contre le mur), meubles (derrière le présentoir), montres et autres objets de valeur (dans le présentoir), magnétoscope (sur le présentoir).... De fait les gages non réclamés constituent un vaste échantillon variant au gré de la conjoncture économique, des disponibilités des individus, de leurs besoins, de leur richesse supposée et, n'en doutons pas, de leur pauvreté aussi. Le site du réseau chinois des maisons de prêt sur gage permet de tester cette diversité. L'enquête a porté sur 968 gages non réclamés qui étaient offerts à la convoitise de surfeurs chinois en quête de «bonnes affaires» fin janvier 2002. À travers ces données nous n'avons qu'un aperçu très partiel de l'activité des maisons chinoises de prêt sur gage, peut être même qu'une représentation quelque peu biaisée. Les objets les plus souvent gagés (et non réclamés) sont les bijoux en or ou en argent (20,5 %), puis viennent les bijoux montés avec du jade ou d'autres pierres (17,7 %), les appareils photos (15,7 %), les bijoux montés avec des diamants (11,9 %); ces quatre catégories constituent à elles seules les deux tiers des transactions proposées (65,7 %), quant aux bijoux seuls ils couvrent la moitié exactement de ces transactions (50,1 %). En revanche, deux catégories très différentes dominent par la valeur cumulée des gages (cote à la revente) : d'une part les montres qui représentent 10,8 % des gages non réclamés par le nombre, pèsent 50,1 % de la valeur des gages à la revente, d'autre part les véhicules, 2,6 % des gages non réclamés, pour 35,5 % de la valeur.

Les bijoux auxquels il faut ajouter les montres (de fait souvent des bijoux aussi) seraient donc les objets les plus représentatifs des transactions quotidiennes et les plus évocateurs sans doute du manque d'entregent

entrepreneurial de ces «hommes d'affaires». Bien entendu toutes les montres portent la griffe d'un grand horloger. S'exhiber avec une telle montre est prétendre à un statut pour lequel les apparences extérieures d'honorabilité comptent de fait plus que les entreprises antérieures effectivement réussies. La montre devient donc la marque emblématique de l'entrepreneur chinois : sur les 105 montres gagées, toutes sauf quatre sont des montres d'homme. En revanche, les autres bijoux sont plus largement féminins.

En guise de conclusion

La première chose que nous enseigne cette résurgence des maisons de prêt sur gage est que le passé n'est désormais plus systématiquement tabou. Le discours officiel se préoccupe d'habiller ces officines de telle sorte qu'elles apparaissent «politiquement correctes» à ses propres yeux d'abord mais aussi aux yeux des différents acteurs économiques; certes il s'agit d'une contribution à un ordre moral, toutefois ce nouvel ordre moral se révèle moins dogmatique, moins fermé à la réalité des faits que l'ordre antérieur qui condamnait *a priori* toute activité économique échappant (ou risquant d'échapper) au contrôle des administrations chinoises.

Cette ouverture intellectuelle manifeste aussi un rôle accru de la société civile et de ces composantes. Bien que les entrepreneurs ne se soient pas constitués en des formes d'organisation spécifiques (exception faite de pseudo ONG comme la Fédération panchinoise de l'industrie et du commerce), ils savent agir collectivement par le biais de groupes opportunistes comme le Comité spécial panchinois du prêt sur gage. Ces groupes ne sont pas des structures définies mais plutôt des groupes en développement qui, en s'organisant en association, agissent d'une manière potentiellement stratégique comme le remarque à juste titre Thomas Heberer (2003 : 5). De fait, l'histoire récente des maisons de prêt sur gage nous apprend que la réforme se négocie; même s'il est naturellement volontariste, le gouvernement chinois doit néanmoins se soumettre de temps à autre à la critique des agents économiques.

Cette négociation des réformes – quand elle lieu – a une vertu puisqu'elle aboutit à formaliser des pratiques financières informelles. Elle a aussi ses limites évidentes. Les activités financières informelles ne sont pas toutes menées par des entrepreneurs dont les compétences en font des interlocuteurs potentiels; c'est le cas des tontines pyramidales à caractère commercial gérées le plus souvent par des femmes n'ayant qu'un très faible niveau d'instruction. À l'opposé, relevant plus de la nanofinance que de la microfinance et n'ayant aucun

caractère commercial, on trouve les tontines amicales difficiles à réglementer. L'expérience taiwanaise (Pairault, 2004) montre alors qu'il existe d'autres voies pour adapter la forme aux besoins qu'exprime le marché.

Sur le marché des capitaux, les maisons de prêt sur gage offrent des services qu'aucune banque, en particulier les chinoises à ce stade de leur évolution, ne saurait procurer. La caractéristique propre aux petits entrepreneurs individuels est qu'il confondent le plus souvent en une même caisse consommation personnelle et consommation productive, épargne personnelle et réserve de trésorerie. L'achat par exemple de montres pour les hommes, de parures pour leurs femmes joue le rôle de satisfaire ces exigences duelles. C'est d'abord une consommation ostentatoire revendiquant pour leurs détenteurs une certaine honorabilité et un certain prestige commercial. C'est aussi une épargne de précaution manifestant une incontestable préférence pour l'illiquidité (Shipton, 1992). Plus il y a d'épargne, plus il y a de bijoux et plus il y a de «face» (*mianzi* 面子) et de crédit. Seule les maisons de prêt sur gage sont à même de répondre à cette stratégie propre aux micro-entrepreneurs. Gager un bien revient à payer pour conserver son épargne; on accepte de verser un intérêt élevé pour disposer passagèrement de liquidités avec la certitude de retrouver à terme son épargne intacte. Les banques chinoises ont certes très récemment commencé à proposer de constituer des comptes à terme pouvant servir de nantissement à des facilités de trésorerie; il reste toutefois qu'un livret de caisse d'épargne ne donne pas l'heure aussi précisément qu'une *Rolex*, une *Breitling* ou toute autre montre d'une marque qui puisse «en jeter», ni ne peut se porter en sautoir – le solde bien visible – comme un collier autour du cou d'une femme.

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Notes

1 Il est possible que la structure actuelle soit issue d'un comité antérieur en charge du prêt sur gage comme des enchères (*Quanguo diandang paimai zhuanye wei yuanhui* 全国典当拍卖专业委员会), voir par exemple http://www.blpm.com.cn/mj.htm lu le 30 juin 2003.

2 Ces photographies ont été prises au début de l'année 2002 peu de temps avant le Nouvel an chinois. Je tiens à remercier ici Arnaud Heckmann pour toute la part qu'il a prise dans l'exécution de ce projet et l'aide qu'il m'a apportée.

3   Il ne faut pas confondre la ville et la municipalité de Chongqing, la seconde est une circonscription administrative de rang provincial incluant la première. Les informations sur la municipalité de Chongqing sont reprises du mémoire de DEA d'Arnaud Heckmann.

4   Zhuo 1993 et *Diandang Xinxi* 典当信息 (Actualité du prêt sur gage), 7 février 2001, http://www.pawn.com.cn/list.asp?id=108.

5   Les règles édictées par le nouveau régime de 2001 sont plus souples (cf. Pairault, 2002).

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Museum Review / Muséologie

Listening for the Conversation: The First People's Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization[1]

Reviewer: *Julia Harrison*
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On January 31, 2003 the First Peoples Hall (FPH) opened at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) in Hull, Quebec after over 11 years of planning and development. It offers a welcome relief to the limited, if dramatic, message of the houses, poles and monumental contemporary sculptures of the Native peoples, past and present of the Pacific Coast which greets all visitors to the Museum's Grand Hall. As magnificent as these original exhibits are, they privilege so singularly the Native populations of only one region of the country—and not even the ones who claim ownership of the land on which the museum stands—that they have to have served as an embarrassment to museum staff since the Museum opened in 1989. Although probably not intended, the content of the Grand Hall is reminiscent of Hollywood discourses or those of the tourism industry, fostering simplistic representations of "Indians," such that one "Indian" is read to stand for all. Museum staff has worked hard in recent years to identify that the Grand Hall includes materials from only the Native people of the North West Coast of Canada, but I am doubtful that this distinction was and is fully grasped by many visitors. Until the FPH opened, with the exception of a few temporary exhibitions, there had been little to suggest the diversity of Aboriginal populations in Canada in the Museum's exhibitions. Now once visitors find their way to the FPH's entrance after traversing the magnificent space of the Grand Hall, there is much that they can learn about the indigenous peoples of this country, the variety and richness of their cultures and their contributions to the Canadian nation.

Background to the FPH

In the late 1980s the large empty gallery behind the Grand Hall on the Museum's ground floor was designated as the FPH. This 40 000 square foot space was to house one of two permanent galleries at the Museum. The first, which was installed on the third floor and largely complete at the time of the Museum's opening, was Canada Hall. This theme park-like gallery tells the history at least in part, of European settlement in Canada.[2] In the late 1980s, preliminary plans began for the installation of the FPH. These early plans, however, were promptly shelved when they were deemed too traditional and too old-fashioned, in the midst of public debates about how Canada's Native people should be represented in the country's museums, generated by controversies surrounding 1988 *The Spirit Sings* exhibition at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary.[3] Thus the beginning of the planning of the current iteration of the FPH is designated as having begun in 1992, following the release of the Canadian Museums Association/Assembly of First Nations Task Force report, *Turning the Page* (Nicks and Hill, 1992) which laid out the principles and guidelines about how, among other museological matters, exhibitions about Aboriginal people in Canada should be done.[4] They were to be collaborative undertakings between museum staff and Aboriginal people.

Such collaboration is no small task for a museum whose constituency spans the entire nation. There are over one million Aboriginal people in Canada dispersed in every region and city across the country. Who could actually represent this diverse and complex population? In the end, an Aboriginal Consultation Committee for the FPH was formed, comprised of about 30 individuals. Many of the Committee's members had pre-existing connections with CMC either as employees of cultural centres within their own communities, as artists and craftworkers, or as professional archaeologists. Others were individuals knowledgeable about their cultural traditions who were willing to come to Ottawa for regular meetings. A central concern for the Museum was that there was adequate regional representation among the group. The exact number on the Committee varied as not all members could make every meeting. Such fluidity was to characterize the personnel from both sides who were to work on the exhibit and its development over its gestation period. The Consultation Committee met nine times over two years. It had been charged with providing "guidance in generating the basic principles and processes for development of the exhibits," however

the Committee's mandate was [eventually] expanded to include subjects other than the basic principles which would guide [the FPH] development: primary floorplans, allotment of spaces for various modes of exhibition; and the essential thematic structure of exhibits.[5]

The Committee, a group of people of diverse backgrounds, both Native and non-Native, developed the following set of principles to guide the development of the FPH. They were:

• All First Peoples of Canada will be represented in the Hall, including those following traditional and contemporary paths and those living in both rural and urban environments.

• Recognizing the value of multiple forms of discourse, we affirm that the knowledge and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples are vital to an understanding of issues in Native history and will be a primary element in initiating and planning the form and content of exhibitions and programmes and the messages they present.

• The diversity of Aboriginal languages, cultures, ways of life and views of the world will be affirmed and celebrated.

• We recognize that the diversity of traditional and contemporary First Peoples is based on a profound capacity to adapt to natural, social and political environments and to develop innovative ways to respond to changes in these environments.

• We recognize that the interpretation of First Peoples' history is growing and dynamic, and the design of the Hall and its exhibit space should provide for flexibility of interpretation through the decades to come.

• The importance of Aboriginal languages as the primary vehicle for transmitting and perpetuating First Peoples' cultural traditions is recognized. Therefore, Aboriginal languages will be used throughout the Hall in the interpretation and presentation of First Peoples' cultures.

• The Hall will present the history, culture and current realities of Aboriginal peoples in the voice(s) of Aboriginal peoples.

• The Hall will present to the public an opportunity to hear and understand the voice of the First Peoples, proclaiming: "We are still here, still contributing, and still playing our own distinctive part in the modern world, as we always have." In exhibits, care will be taken to explore the relationship between the present and the past.

• The Hall will address both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences. It will dispel stereotypes and underline the value of Aboriginal cultures and traditions.

• Artistic creativity in both traditional and contemporary expressions is recognized as an important means of interpreting and communicating First Peoples' cultures. Forms of artistic expression from all periods will be used as a means of presenting First Peoples' cultures throughout the Hall.

• The common experiences of Native peoples, including their

singular relationship to federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada, and to all Canadians, will be an important theme.

• Portions of the Hall will be devoted to exhibits dealing with: contemporary life and traditions; recent history (the past 500 years), including the interactions of First Peoples with Europeans and with each other; the decimation of First Peoples' populations; Aboriginal languages; ancient (pre-European) history; and origin and creation narratives. The First Peoples Hall will have a mix of temporary exhibit space and space allotted to more enduring exhibits.

• In developing the exhibits, we are working with ideas. While we recognize and treasure the skill, knowledge and aesthetic quality represented in the objects in the collections, in exhibits the role of objects will be to illustrate ideas. The shape of the collection will not determine, or limit, the character of exhibits. (CMCC Principles for Development of the First Peoples Hall, created 1998; edited 2002).[6]

The Committee agreed to determine themes for the core exhibits. A smaller group of about seven individuals continued to consult with CMC staff and outside consultants to develop the storyline for the exhibition based on these principles and themes. This process took four years, beginning in 1994, with the final storyline and design concept approved in 1998. In the end four key themes actually shaped the exhibit: "We are still here," "We are diverse," "We contribute," and "We have an ancient relationship with the land."[7] Consultation and cooperation continued throughout the development of the exhibition with these seven individuals, but also with a network of individuals who were consulted for specific points of information and clarification. One senior Museum official stated that members of the Aboriginal Consultation Committee were some of the most consistent voices throughout the project's development.[8] The stability of personnel typical within the CMC curatorial departments was regrettably not a feature of the FPH working group. One key individual, central to the early development of the exhibit left the Museum and other staff dropped on and off the project throughout its gestation, with only a very limited number having an ongoing involvement. Some archaeologists who were front and centre in the early stages had little to do with the final outcome. Members of the Ethnology Department staff had little to do with the project in its early development, but in the end, played a central role in bringing it to fruition. Exhibit developers were central to moving the project along, but many left for opportunities elsewhere in the civil service before the exhibit's completion. Various Aboriginal interns (part of a training program started by the Mmuseum in response to the Task Force report) worked on the project, with some of them eventually joining the Museum as staff. These changes are expected when a project extends over such a lengthy period, but what is relevant to my discussion is that each shift in staff required a certain re-adjustment of focus in the exhibit plan, costing time and undoubtedly money. These shifts could account for

some of the "emptiness" spaces in the FPH, such as that between the last two galleries. Having been privy to various visions for the Hall as it developed through the late 1990s, it was clear to me that the final product was a much streamlined version of earlier conceptualizations, in the end only filling half of the original square footage allotted for the gallery.

Content of the First Peoples Hall

The FPH is divided into four "zones" each of which is intended to re-enforce the four central themes. The zones are *Greeting and Orientation, Diversity and Origins, Survival and Cooperation in Ancient History* and *Arrival of Europeans and Modern Existence.*

Zones I and II: Greeting and Orientation/ Diversity and Origins

A series of large sepia toned images of Aboriginal people dating apparently (as they were unlabelled) from the late 19th or early 20th centuries greet visitors at the entrance to the gallery. These historic images are a curious preface to an exhibition in which the vibrancy of contemporary Aboriginal life is to be emphasized. Once in the first gallery visitors are welcomed with a message from the Algonquin Council of Elders of *Kitigan Zibi* on whose traditional lands the Museum stands. Next a large video screen introduces you to a number of Aboriginal people of a range in ages, from all across the country. Briefly, they each tell their personal story. They live a range of lifestyles and work at everything from policemen, school principals, consultants, artists, entrepreneurs and trappers. One of the most successful sections of the FPH follows under the rubric "An Aboriginal Presence." In a real break from traditional museum representation, Aboriginal people are identified as individuals, in this case persons generally well known both inside and outside the native community (see Photo 1). Notable examples are Buffy Ste. Marie, Louis Riel, Tom Jackson, George Clutesi, Pauline Johnson and historian Olive Dickason. Other individuals are less well-known, but clearly share significant "fame" in their own communities. Each person is introduced through an object that has direct connection to them, a brief biography, and a photograph. The theme "We are Diverse" is presented in the remainder of the introductory gallery in a dizzying and eclectic array of artifacts: canoes, hats, headdresses, gauntlets, harpoons, mittens, baskets, spoons, parkas, hunting equipment, nets and baskets. These objects from the impressive and expansive CMC Ethnology collections, combined with a diverse collection of photographs and images are intended to prompt notions of diversity, creativity, survival, continuity, an ancient history, memories of elders and the presence of a contemporary Aboriginal population in Canada. Many of the objects and photographs are loosely dated, with contemporary and historic items and images exhibited side by side. Such juxtapositioning speaks to the theme, "We are still here" as "our traditions continue."

The decision to juxtapose objects from different peoples in different parts of the country is not without its problems. The emphasis on diversity of Native cultures in Canada possibly warrants this, but if the average visitor does not know how many kilometers separate the Gw'ichin, the Tsuu T'sina and Mi'kmaq and that each represents a very distinct cultural tradition, in far-flung corners of Canada, the impact of such diversity is lost. Nowhere in the gallery can the visitor find detailed information on any one group. The use of interactive computer terminals is one possible way that the interested visitor might be able learn more of the diversity and complexity of the Canadian Native populations.

Photo 1: Harry Foster, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Land is vital to Canadian Aboriginal identity. It is freedom, life, the future, the past and the present—all ideas articulated in the video that introduces the next gallery, entitled "Markers on the Land." A large topographic map dominates the space. The complexity of "place names" is suggested through representations of such realities as the mouth of the Nimpkish River on Vancouver Island having one name in English, but 110 in Kwak'wala, with each name specifying a particular geographic feature or the site of some long remembered event. Banners highlighting the marking of land through *inukshuks*, trails, constellations, boulder configurations, petroglyphs and now stop signs in Aboriginal languages, engage the visitor with the notion of how Aboriginal people mark the land. Symbols of these different ways of "knowing" the land lead one into a space called "Ways of Knowing," fitted with furniture, drawers of artifacts and an array of books, all circling a large un-named Inuit sculpture. This space presents the visitor with four broad epistemological structures that ground what is "known" about Aboriginal peoples. These include archaeology, oral tradition, historical documentation ethnography and contemporary "revival" initiatives such as film making and basket-weaving. Intended to set the context for the following gallery entitled "Our Origins," the visitors that I observed in this space seemed confused as to its purpose.

Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike have, contentiously debated the subject of origins, or more specifically,

the role of the Bering Strait in the original settlement of North America. Text adjacent to a tiny Dorset mask acknowledges an ancient presence of Aboriginal people in North America, along with the idea that Native inhabitants have "been here before the land took its present form." An elaborate simulation of the Blue Fish Caves in the Yukon allows the visitor to walk over an archaeologist's "grid" of a cave floor littered with mammoth, horse and other miscellaneous bones. Adjacent exhibits of burins, micro-blades and butchering techniques for large animals, are all accompanied by extensive label copy and maps. The Debert, Grant Lake and Kettle Lake sites are discussed to support the scientific argument for a path of early North American settlement originating with the glaciation of the Bering Strait.

The visitor's next encounter is Haudenosaunee artist Shelly Niro's dramatic and engaging installation of Sky Woman who brought humans to the world, a work commissioned for the FPH (see Photo 2). Adjacent works by contemporary artists Roy Vickers, Vincent Bomberry and Frances Kagige speak of Coast Tsmishian, Cayuga and Ojibwa creation stories, respectively. At the centre of this "creation story" gallery a 22-minute video, dramatizing a Miq'kmaq version, is presented in a small theatre. An introductory text states that these "stories" are told in homes, schools and cultural centres. They are narratives interpreted by artists, writers and actors for Aboriginal communities, just as the bits of chipped rock and fragments of bone found in the previous galleries are interpreted (largely) for non-Aboriginal communities by archaeologists.[9] No parallel, however, is made between both forms of interpretations and the role they each play in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world as narratives, which underpin very different epistemologies and world views.

Photo 2: Sky Woman. Installation by artist Shelly Niro. Photo: Harry Foster, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Storytelling continues as a central theme in the next gallery. An audio booth with recorded stories from the Blackfoot, Dene, Metis, Ojibwa and West Coast peoples is juxtaposed impressive art works by Norval Morriseau, Roy Thomas, Larry Hill and Robert Davidson. These artworks and stories highlight both the relations between humans and animals that have sustained human life and the role these stories play in communicating life's "truths" within the Aboriginal world. A salient quote from Anishnabe writer and artist Blake Debassige, notes that stories told by elders promote wisdom and reflection on what constitutes one's lived reality.

Zone III: Survival and Co-operation in Ancient History

The next large gallery highlights the role of whaling, fishing, communal hunting, farming and trading in Aboriginal societies of North America. Dioramas of artifacts, with panels of waist-high, back-lit text (and thus often hard to read—see Photo 3) present various subsistence strategies with pertinent examples from across the country. For example, in the section on communal hunting both the Plains bison hunt and the Dene caribou hunt are included. With heavy emphasis on technology and gender roles, the gallery echoes introductory anthropology textbooks, which often privilege a cultural ecology view of the human experience. Each diorama is punctuated by a short video, which the visitor—by now somewhat weary—stands to watch. In three of these videos the tragedy of the mass slaughter by non-Aboriginals of the bison herds, the potential impact on caribou herds of Northern pipeline development and the recent conflicts over fishing rights at Burnt Church are discussed. The role of women in the 1990 Oka crisis as an extension of their important place in Iroquoian society, and the contemporary powwow trail as an extension of earlier trade and communal gatherings are the subjects of the two final videos. I wondered why such important topics were not given greater presence in the overall narrative of the gallery. Most visitors, I observed, simply walked by the silent videos, not stopping to don the cumbersome headphones to hear what they had to say. What happened at Burnt Church and Oka, as well as the complexities of northern pipeline development, are important events in the contemporary Canadian political reality. Why is the emphasis in the gallery so singularly on "ancient history?"Why are pre-contact lifestyles of hunting, arctic whaling, maritime subsistence, the longhouse and trade fairs presented as if they were removed from the larger sociopolitical context of the last 200 years? Why not balance these stories with the contemporary political and social challenges to retaining elements of a hunting, gathering, fishing, whaling subsistence in the 21st century? Would not such discussions speak directly to the theme of "We are still here?"

Photo 3: Steven Darby, Canadian Museum of Civilization

Zone IV: Arrival of Europeans and Modern Existence

Jarringly one emerges from the dark, even somewhat mysterious gallery on traditional subsistence patterns into a white, starkly-lit gallery which tells the story of the arrival of strangers, or as a press release said, the "shock wave" of the arrival of Europeans. Introductory copy for this final gallery recounts a Mi'kmaq story of a young girl who dreamt of the arrival of strangers, and Samuel Hearne's recording of the rather uncomplimentary description by the Dene he encountered in 1777, who said his skin resembled "meat sodden in water till all blood drained from it." These accounts establish how this European arrival was seen as one of foreboding, or at the very least, as a very curious event. A somewhat disconnected list of thematic headings—"Early Relations," "Metis," "Beliefs," "Intergovernmental Relations," "Economy," "Social Gatherings," "Art" and "Affirmation"—structures this gallery, with a multiplicity of sub-themes within each section.

Narratives of the inland and coastal fur trade begin the gallery. The demise of the Beothuk at the hands of newly arrived settlers, the emergence of the Metis, the devastation of Aboriginal populations by disease, the signing of treaties and the move to reserves, and later residential schools, the introduction of farming to native communities and the impact of missionization are some, but not all of the themes are covered in this section. The gallery is dense with artifacts, which one can, with some study, link to the thematic text panels—a task most easily done, I found, if one has some prior knowledge of the subject. The thematic text is essentially a running narrative describing key historical events, rarely making specific reference to how the artifacts on display connect to these events. An example from contemporary Metis artist Bob Boyer's series of painted blankets is hung in the proximity to text that describes the devastating impact of disease on Native populations. The piece is tersely labelled "A Government Issue Blanket, 1983." One has to know that in this series of works, Boyer spoke directly to claims that

small pox infested blankets were distributed to Native people, fostering a rapid and devastating on spread of the disease to understand why it was hung here. More details are offered about yet more objects in thick, daunting binders positioned throughout the gallery. These contain archival photographs, images of artifacts (captioned only with catalogue label copy) and a few paragraphs of text highlighting things relevant to the gallery. These are a little overwhelming as museum fatigue and a certain frustration at having to work hard to piece the gallery's story together had set in by this point. (Surprisingly there are no places for visitors to sit in this final gallery, even though the visitor will have walked a minimum of half a kilometer by the time they leave the Hall.[10])

Potent themes such as the impact of residential schools are neutralized by noting that not all of those who attended them found them a demoralizing and deeply troubling experience. Although this is true, the suggestion that the positive and negative impacts on Native populations were equivalent is misleading. Resistance is are a theme that slips in frequently, but is never boldly stated. Examples noted include the tough negotiations by those who traded early with the Europeans; those who stealthily slipped away from residential schools to undergo traditional initiation rituals; and the emergence of syncretic religious practice in many communities.

In the section on residential schools there is a photograph of a young man, wearing a traditional loin cloth and headdress, participating in a Sun Dance ritual. The image is labelled, "Indian Sun Dance, Making a Brave"—wording which was standard in the discourse of an earlier era, but is hardly so in the 21st century. Juxtaposed with this image is one of a group of young boys taken following their admission to a residential school, wearing suits with their heads shaved. Such western attire suggests that a "civilized" order has been imposed on their young bodies, an order that would widely be read to stand in stark contrast to that of the Sun Dance rituals. The contrast of these two images is unsettling—a discomfort to which visitors need not be protected, *if* they are engaged to reflect on the ideologies and power dimensions that underlay this change.

Native spirituality, beyond a discussion of its interaction with Christian traditions, is not discussed in the exhibition, making the Sun Dance images even more confusing. This omission was a conscious decision of the early Consultation Committee and one for which the logic seems reasonable, as these are complex theologies, and not necessarily beliefs to be shared openly. Discussion of this omission in the exhibition could prompt the visitor's reflection on why such a decision was taken, and the imperative of Native people to keep their traditional spiritual practices private. The absence of label copy which draws the reader in more directly fails to prompt any questioning of the information offered.

In this final gallery the political history and gains of Aboriginal peoples in the latter 20th century are highlighted, along with contemporary lifestyles and continuing traditions. An example of the latter is a display on lacrosse. However, as

I gleaned from comments made by one mystified visitor, the labels were not adequate for a someone who had no prior knowledge of what a lacrosse stick looks like, or even that it is a game.

Aboriginal war veterans, the struggle of Aboriginal women over Bill C31 and several key political and constitutional struggles are discussed here.[11] Affirmation through art, contemporary political gains and full engagement on their own terms with mainstream Canadian society are the central messages of the final exhibits and video. A display of contemporary Aboriginal art ushers the visitor out of the FPH. While the examples of contemporary Aboriginal artistic expression are magnificent, the inclusion of this work here plays to a stereotype that "culture" is something best evidenced in "creative/artistic" projects. A few examples of Indian humour are pinned to a small bulletin board near the exit—the small number of items on the board is notable—considering the richness of the material available. Regardless, this modest inclusion is an important, yet very understated element of the story being told in the FPH.[12] The humanity of Aboriginal people so strong in the opening galleries is only fleetingly revisited here—a point I return to below.

Listening for the Conversation

It is early in the history of the FPH to get any real sense of its success with the general public. On the four separate visits that I made to the gallery, I observed that people seemed to stop longest in the first sections of the *Diversity and Origins* gallery—an exhibition which visually attracts one's attention and highlights the lives of individual people. The overall design of the Hall is a serpentine path, a form that propels people along rather than encouraging them to stop and read the text and examine the objects. Too often, the artifacts seem to serve as decorative objects, rather than the complex symbolic and metaphorical referents that they are. Individual labels are all too often formulaic listings of the object name (e.g., cradleboard, copper—terms themselves which only make sense to those with some inside information); the name of the people who made it; sometimes where they are located (BC, Alberta); a vague date (e.g., before 1925); what it is made of (e.g., cedar, glass beads); and the CMC catalogue number. These sparse details are rarely enough information to allow a connection with the narrative thematic text. More interpretive labels for at least some of the objects could potentially draw the visitor in to actually "read" the objects in relation to the themes presented.

It is noted in the first gallery of the FPH that 59% of Canada's Aboriginal population lives in urban centers. However, this population gets little attention in the FPH. Discussion of this reality is no simple task, even for the Aboriginal community itself. Such residence patterns for some have the political potential to work against claims for rights over traditional lands and resources. At the same time, these statistics speak to the successful engagement of Aboriginals with mainstream society. Why not engage the visitor with the complexity that this reality presents for indigenous peoples of this country, whose Aboriginal title is recognized in the Constitution, something which should not be seen to hinge on where individuals choose to live.

Overall, I found myself craving a much more conversational discussion by the time I reached the last gallery. At a modest level, such a dialogue would prompt a more interactive visitor experience—something which is unfortunately lacking throughout the FPH as whole—but it would also foster some understanding of the complexity of the history and future of Canada's indigenous population. These realities are politically, if not morally charged, highlighting that straightforward resolutions are not always readily achievable. An *Ottawa Citizen* reviewer found this glossing desirable suggesting that the FPH "walks a fine line between offering its content for consideration and pushing it as an argument."[13] "Content for consideration" unfortunately is read as stating the "truth," and "argument" according to this journalist is the pushing of a polemic. Such journalistic commentary hints at what CMC faced in mounting the FPH.

Museum officials informed me that it was intended that there be multiple voices present in the FPH, yet there little in the exhibition that prompts the visitor to engage in a dialogue with its subjects and themes. The videos in the exhibition are welcome infusions of Native voices, but in three of the four galleries an institutional voice seems to drown them out. "We" predominates in the early galleries, but is much more muted as one moves through the exhibition. The Native "we" that is found in the FPH frequently speaks as a collective voice of Native people in Canada. In counterpoint there are voices and faces of individuals, in quotations, on video screens and named artists whose works frame the exit to the final gallery. Historical figures such as Shenadidit, Thaneldelthur, Louis Riel are included. Beyond these, sadly the genius and unique character of the individual hands that made the objects that fill the galleries are forever silent. These identities were rarely recorded, a point worth making to the public. It was the exoticism of the objects which fascinated the early collectors. In the end these items represented something generically "Indian," a designation which muted the cultural diversity of the indigenous peoples of this country. Details of their makers, their intended purpose or cultural significance mattered much less to those who collected these materials. Thus largely, and understandably, the individual Aboriginal voices heard in the gallery are contemporary ones. They are bold, engaging, thoughtful and insightful, even provocative. Despite these inclusions, however, an anonymous institutional/hegemonic voice is ubiquitous in the label copy, particularly in the last two galleries. This generic voice stands in contrast to the energy and spontaneity apparent in the quotations, stories and voices on some of the videos—all of which are Aboriginal.

In the end, the voices heard in the exhibit seem rather to speak sequentially, than in conversation. Aboriginal people,

archaeologists, ethnologists and artists all had a chance to speak, but they did not seem to necessarily be talking to one another. The visitor, meanwhile, is completely shut out from joining in the discussion. The declarative syntax of the label copy, particularly in later galleries, suggests an authoritative positioning of the institutional voice. The homogeneity of the design strategy (uniform font size, styles and typeface) suggests that all themes expressed by this voice are of equal concern—but is the continuance of lacrosse of equal importance to treaties, residential schools and racism—the latter being examples of themes buried in the consistency of the design strategy?

The burden of being a national institution, working in the context of a lumbering and underfunded bureaucracy coupled with conflicting visions of what the First Peoples exhibit could and should have been, all played out during the FPH's lengthy development, and weighed heavily on those who ultimately had the monumental task of pulling it all together. Some greater suggestion of the discursive nature of relations between Canadian First Peoples and the state would have been desirable to see in the FPH—an engagement fraught with ambiguity, politics, contradiction and every so often, good will. Collaborative relations between Aboriginal people and museums and ultimately their publics, as laid out in the Turning the Page document need to be those of conversation, where not every sentence is finished and ideas are continually in formulation. While achieving a great deal, and definitely a welcome change from the pre-1990s exhibitions in Canada's national museums, this conversation at in the FPH is often only whispered, and at times falls silent.

Notes

1   I am thankful for the assistance given to me by Michel Cheff, Director of Special Initiatives and Yasmine Mingay from the Media office at CMC.
2   It would appear that the Grand Hall was also a fairly permanent exhibit as many of the houses had been specifically commissioned for the space, but it is apparently not designated as a "gallery" in the same way as Canada Hall and the FPH.
3   See Ames 1988, Ames and Trigger 1988, Elton and Doolittle et al., 1987, Harrison 1993, Harrison et al., 1987a, 1987b, Trigger, 1988.
4   A grassroots consultation process directed by the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations brought museums and local Native communities together to discuss their relationship. Recommendations from these discussions were integrated into the final Task Force report, called Turning the Page.
5   March 21/95 Internal CMC document entitled "First Peoples Hall Principles, Themes and Storyline."

6   This information was in an internal document provided to me by Michel Cheff, Director of Special Initiatives, CMC.
7   CMC Communiqué, Jan. 30, 2003.
8   Michel Cheff, personal communication.
9   It should be noted that archaeological evidence has been used frequently by Aboriginal peoples in establishing their claim to certain lands in various legal battles.
10 CMC website: http://www.civilization.ca/media/docs/fsfph02e.html. Last checked August 6, 2003.
11 Bill C31, passed in 1985, re-instated Indian status to women who had married non-Native men. The re-instatement also applied to any offspring from these marriages. Symbolically and materially this was a very important change for many women and children. It did, however, some claim, put a strain on the limited resources available on Aboriginal reserves.
12 One example from the board is: "What do you call an Indian vegetarian? A poor hunter!"
13 Anonymous, Hall Honours First Nations, The Ottawa Citizen, Feb., 2, 2003: C4.

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Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Yolande Pelchat, *L'Obsession de la différence. Récit d'une biotechnologie*, Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003, 210 pages.

Recenseur : *Éric Gagnon*
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Depuis un peu plus d'un siècle maintenant qu'elle tente de tracer les contours de la culture et d'établir l'inventaire des universaux, l'anthropologie repousse toujours plus loin les frontières de la nature, découvrant des variations dans ce que l'on croyait universel ou naturel, et de la malléabilité dans ce que l'on croyait immuable. À l'heure des débats sur la génétique et le *post-humain*, les travaux des anthropologues prennent une signification nouvelle, en contribuant à dissoudre toute représentation de la «nature humaine».

L'ouvrage de Yolande Pelchat s'inscrit dans cette entreprise de déconstruction des frontières et des catégories touchant la nature. Il retrace l'histoire d'une biotechnologie, le vaccin contraceptif, destiné à contrôler la croissance démographique dans les pays où les moyens contraceptifs habituels ont peu de succès. L'auteur analyse ses conditions d'émergence au début des années 1960, les discussions scientifiques et le débat auquel le vaccin va donner lieu, les raisons finalement de son abandon (peut-être seulement provisoire) au milieu des années 1990. Le récit est celui des rencontres d'un ensemble de protagonistes (immunologistes, démographes, organisations internationales, organisations militantes), de leur coopération et de leurs affrontements dans la conception et la légitimation du vaccin, à différents moments importants. Il va des premiers efforts des démographes pour intéresser les immunologistes au projet, en passant par les conférences scientifiques, jusqu'à la campagne pour en arrêter le développement. Le récit est bien monté, l'investigation curieuse et documentée, la démonstration dans l'ensemble convaincante. On prend vite intérêt à lire cet ouvrage.

Qu'il s'agisse d'un contraceptif n'est pas anodin, lorsque l'on sait l'importance de la reproduction sur le plan des représentations sociales, dans la construction sociale du *même* et du *différent*, mais aussi dans les débats et politiques touchant les pays dits en voie de développement. Si l'auteure identifie certains intérêts en jeu ou les idéologies motivant certains

acteurs (les organismes internationaux intéressés par le contrôle des naissances, notamment), ce n'est pas uniquement, ni principalement du point de vue du contexte social qu'elle analyse l'histoire de ce vaccin et ses péripéties, mais de la manière dont la science organise le réel, autant qu'il en rend compte. Guidée par l'anthropologie des sciences de Bruno Latour, elle examine comment va se construire la «éalité» scientifique, rendant possible le vaccin, techniquement, mais surtout socialement. Elle analyse la production des faits scientifiques accompagnant la mise au point d'une technologie, leur transformation progressive pour surmonter les obstacles rencontrés. Elle examine la renégociation constante de la nature, du système immunitaire et de la reproduction, des différences entre le masculin et le féminin, entre le soi et l'autre (le Tiers-monde), elle cherche à comprendre comment la recherche scientifique retravaille la nature, et déplace ses frontières. L'un des passages les plus intéressants et des plus convaincants, est celui où l'auteure montre comment un changement dans la représentation du système immunitaire a permis de lever certains obstacles à la production d'un vaccin intervenant sur les antigènes, Elle montre comment la théorie du réseau en immunologie (apparue dans les années 1970), en faisant de l'auto-immunité un processus normal de régulation, entraîne un déplacement de la représentation du soi et de l'étranger dans l'organisme. Les anti-corps cessent alors d'apparaître comme des éléments étrangers dans le corps, et le vaccin ne peut plus être associé à un produit abortif, ce qui constituait un obstacle dans le contexte des luttes anti-avortement aux Etats-Unis au tournant des anées 1980. Le système immunitaire change de «nature», et les possibilités techniques changent du même coup.

Dans le débat sur la pertinence d'un tel vaccin, l'auteure ne prend nullement position. L'objet de son étude est la construction d'un objet technique, et sa visée, la déconstruction de la vérité scientifique. En conclusion cependant, elle revient sur la légitimité de son point de vue, en répondant aux objections formulées par Anthony Giddens à l'endroit d'une telle approche relativiste en sciences sociales, qui supprime tout point de vue moral et politique d'où l'on puisse porter un jugement. Yolande Pelchat le reconnaît elle-même, son analyse ne fournit aucun argument pour prendre position dans le débat. Son objectif, précise-t-elle est justement

de nous déprendre des termes du débat, de donner à voir et à discuter sur ce qui passe pour indiscutable et certain. La force critique d'une telle analyse, il faut le reconnaître, peut être grande, lorsqu'elle est argumentée et inspirée (pensons à l'œuvre de Foucault et à son impact). Elle élargit notre pensée et notre liberté. Mais elle ne peut constituer, me semblet-il, qu'un *moment* de la critique. Ne s'agit-il, avec cette histoire du vaccin contraceptif, que de poursuivre la critique du positivisme? Ne sommes-nous pas conduits à nous interroger sur la transformation du vivant, la reproduction et même le développement, et donc vers une interrogation appelant une posture critique différente? L'analyse ne peut ignorer, si elle veut demeurer cohérente, qu'elle est animée elle aussi par des représentations, des valeurs, une ontologie, voire une utopie, qu'elle doit expliciter. Le récit critique de l'anthropologue est aussi un discours et il n'est pas hors du monde, même s'il demeure en retrait par rapport aux débats et controverses. L'analyse des catégories sociales repose largement sur ces catégories, et elle ne peut interroger ce qui se dit, sans devoir à son tour assumer une parole. La formulation d'une position critique, qui allie une vue du dehors et une vue du dedans est peut-être l'une des questions méthodologiques et épistémologiques centrales en anthropologie, et l'on sait gré à Mme Pelchat de ne pas avoir ignoré la question au terme de son excellente étude.

Pierre-Loïc Pacaud, *Un culte d'exhumation des morts à Madagascar : le Famadihana. Anthropologie psychanalytique,* Paris : L'Harmattan.

Recenseur: *Hélène Giguère*
École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales à Paris,

« L'affect a toujours raison...
...l'oubli fait cheminer l'élaboration » (p. 39)

C'est avec ces mots que Pierre-Loïc Pacaud nous introduit dans sa dense analyse du *Famadihana,* rituel d'exhumation des morts sur les hauts-plateaux de Madagascar, chez les Merina. Il dévoile ainsi dès le départ son solide enracinement dans les théories freudiennes, qu'il arrive à mettre au service de l'anthropologie. Selon l'auteur, cette discipline aurait démesurément occulté la dimension psychique du sujet, notamment dans les analyses portant sur les rituels et les croyances, doutant de sa pertinence au sein des phénomènes sociaux et culturels et le reléguant à une psychologie du comportement.

Le travail de Pierre-Loïc Pacaud est ambitieux en plusieurs aspects : d'abord, il entreprend avec brio une approche multidisciplinaire sur un sujet largement traité, en se limitant aux concepts clés et en faisant bon usage des écrits des intellectuels malgaches. Ensuite, il effectue une vérification critique et exhaustive de l'historiographie missionnaire pour retracer l'évolution du discours sur la pratique. Cette analyse entraîne un éclaircissement sémantique des références nominales qui nous introduit à d'heureuses relectures critiques d'ouvrages classiques tels ceux de C. Lévi-Strauss et de F. Raison-Jourde et à une meilleure compréhension du rituel. Son approche psychanalytique vise à repousser à de nouvelles limites la compréhension et l'analyse du rituel par le dévoilement de l'inconscient collectif.

L'auteur s'attache à comprendre «le registre de causalité» de l'efficacité du *Famadihana* en tant que pratique culturelle collective, en se concentrant sur le phénomène de la «répétition». En effet, si le rituel du *Famadihana* a été analysé par plusieurs auteurs (Bloch, Dez, Raison, Rajaoson, etc.) comme de «secondes funérailles», quelle serait la relation entre son efficacité et sa répétition? Si ce rituel consiste en de «secondes funérailles» et en une séparation entre le monde des vivants et celui des morts, pourquoi ce rituel se répéterait-il dans le temps et ce, à l'égard des mêmes ancêtres? Abandonnant d'entrée de jeu le rêve comme cause de la planification du rituel, l'auteur aborde le rituel comme un fait collectif issu d'un contexte culturel particulier comprenant un ordre symbolique. En cela, la psychologie des masses de Freud permet à l'auteur de considérer «l'individu collectif» par analogie au sujet psychique individuel. La première partie de l'ouvrage nous introduit au sujet de l'étude et au parcours de l'auteur, également dans un processus d'exhumation des éléments de son passé en terre malgache.

La seconde partie présente une description du contexte culturel merina, notamment le fonctionnement des alliances et mésalliances en fonction de l'organisation sociale hiérarchique, du système cognatique et du droit à la terre, le tout en relation avec la mémoire intergénérationnelle exercée par le contact soutenu entre les vivants et les défunts. L'auteur ré-interroge notamment les hypothèses de Lévi-Strauss sur les choix préférentiels et dualistes en fonction du sang ou de la terre dans le cadre des unions matrimoniales dans son analyse des choix matrimoniaux, du rapatriement des reliques et de l'accession au tombeau : «...le tombeau assure une fonction presque équivalente, complémentaire à celle que remplit le mariage entre voisins pour les vivants; il est créateur rétrospectif et posthume de parenté réelle, résolutif de dualisme race/terre» (p. 100). Dans son analyse du système de parenté et des échanges, l'auteur reproche notamment à Claude Lévi-Strauss d'avoir isolé la parenté du reste de la culture et propose de restituer le sacré au fondement de l'échange (le *hasindrazana,* la puissance sacrée des ancêtres), la notion profane du «prestige» l'ayant fait disparaître. L'utilisation par l'auteur du concept de «personne morale» comme figure dépersonnalisée d'un pouvoir englobant le monde des morts et celui des vivants semble bien appropriée au contexte.

Dans la troisième partie, l'analyse historique des modifications du rituel dans le temps et la description chronologique du déroulement du rituel permettent d'en exposer les éléments qui serviront à l'analyse de l'affect dans la partie

suivante. Certains passages ré-humanisent les sujets d'étude dans leur diversité et dans la rétribution de leur «corps émotionnel», cette essence qui en fait bien des «sujets» et moins des «objets» de recherche, et grâce auxquels on reconnaît avec plaisir l'humour malgache, notamment à l'égard du sacré et des ancêtres. L'auteur reconsidère en profondeur les observations diachroniques de Françoise Raison-Jourde (1991) en s'appuyant non seulement sur les sources écrites des missionnaires mais aussi, et là consiste son apport majeur, sur la tradition orale transcrite en malgache par le Père Callet (1863-83), «Tantaran' ny andriana eto Madagascar», ce qui vient enrichir le travail monumental de l'historienne. Il rectifie notamment l'interprétation des origines indonésiennes du rituel : «Or, rien ne dit que les rituels indonésiens, puissent servir de calques en l'état, à des pratiques rituelles merina tenues pour similaires, surtout si l'on veut privilégier le singulier de l'avènement et le changement historique. L'hypothèse des migrations successives n'autorise pas à faire l'impasse sur les directions divergentes qu'ont pris ces deux groupes culturels (Merina/Indonésiens) au cours de leur histoire, postérieurement à leur hypothétique séparation spatiale» (p. 146).

Les maintes précisions apportées par l'auteur lui permettent d'établir une «parenté profonde» entre le rituel du bain royal, le *fandroana*, et le rite familial, le *famadihana* notamment en raison de leur «insistance répétitive et commune des gestes d'invocation aux ancêtres aussi bien que dans le motif manifeste qui étaye l'invocation rituelle : la transmission du *hasina*» (p. 146), c'est-à-dire de la puissance sacrée, concept équivalent au *mana* polynésien. Pacaud apporte également des précisions sur les théories lévi-straussiennes au sujet de l'échange des femmes : «Loin d'être fondé sur un rapport de force entre groupes (preneurs et donneurs) dans l'échange des femmes, le système de parenté dépend plutôt des règles qui surdéterminent les alliances matrimoniales, l'adoption, et l'accès des morts au tombeaux. Ces règles remontent toutes *via* la filière des tombeaux, jusqu'à l'ancêtre fondateur du tombeau...» (p. 175). La construction structuraliste réduirait la mort et son rite à une «simple fonction de régulation sociale assurant «rétro-activement» la permanence du groupe» (p. 176) et serait inapte à interpréter notamment la violence rituelle et l'absence de conflits entre deux groupes pour l'accession d'un défunt au tombeau familial.

L'analyse de la relation entre l'affect des vivants à l'égard des reliques durant le déroulement du rituel utilise les apports psychanalytiques directement appliqués au contexte étudié, dans la quatrième partie. C'est ici que l'on tentera plus directement de comprendre pourquoi ce rituel se répète et par conséquent pourquoi celui-ci ne peut se résumer à de «secondes funérailles», comme le proposent les auteurs mentionnés plus tôt. Un analyse de la notion «d'ambivalence» du point de vue de la psychanalyse permet certaines interrogations sur l'épisode relativement «violent» du rituel à l'égard des désirs incestueux auxquels on doit renoncer. Cette inter-

prétation via le conflit de l'ambivalence tel que proposé par Freud au sujet de la «lutte éternelle entre l'Eros et l'instinct de destruction ou de mort» (p. 248), se conclut sur la conversion de sentiments d'agression et de culpabilité en sentiments d'amour à l'égard des reliques, afin de maintenir l'ordre social mais surtout familial. En effet : «Le groupe familial vit dans la hantise permanente de sa division et de la discorde, de la perte de *hasina*.... Le rite réalise le renoncement à la division au bénéfice de l'unité supérieure du groupe, et assure la mutation de la violence en amour» (p. 253).

Enfin, la hantise de la possible perte d'union avec la puissance sacrée des ancêtres, entraînerait la répétition du rite. La violence exécutée collectivement permettrait l'appropriation et le partage par le groupe ou «l'ego collectif» (et non par des membres individuels) de la puissance des ancêtres.

Le processus psychique peut être appliqué au social, sans toutefois réduire le social aux transpositions de la psyché individuelle. Car dans le cadre de l'évolution d'un rituel comme le *Famadihana* chez les Merina, l'ordre hiérarchique et les rapports interculturels ont entraîné des emprunts culturels et des rapports de domination influents qui sont ici relégués au second plan, sans doute dans le but de bien souligner l'influence et la pertinence de la psyché individuelle dans l'importance de la répétition du rituel.

Des références aux discours des acteurs du rituel, soit relevées par les écrits historiques, soit recueillies sur le terrain lors de l'observation contemporaine du rituel, auraient toutefois enrichi la confrontation des discours empiriques et théoriques, les mots de «l'autre» ou du «sujet» offrant au lecteur les instruments lui permettant d'intégrer de façon dialogique le processus d'analyse des données empiriques. On aurait pu aussi s'attendre à un positionnement de l'auteur par rapport aux récents ouvrages en anthropologie des émotions (Abu-Lughod, Appadurai, Lutz, etc.) ou en anthropologie psychanalytique (Csordas, Devereux, Nathan, etc.). Mais Pierre-Loïc Pacaud démontre combien les travaux du père de la psychanalyse peuvent enrichir encore aujourd'hui non seulement la compréhension de phénomènes sociaux et culturels mais plus spécifiquement celle du culte d'exhumation des morts chez les Merina de Madagascar. En effet, son attention portée sur les relations entre l'individu et le groupe expliquerait notamment la pertinence de ses apports théoriques en anthropologie.

La référence en début d'ouvrage à l'expérience de l'auteur personnalise et approfondit le traitement du sujet abordé. Sans doute traitée trop brièvement pour les écoles de pensée nord-américaines sensibles aux nouvelles tendances autobiographiques et intersubjectives, cette auto-observation nous échappe dans le reste de la démonstration.

Enfin, on pourra reprocher à l'auteur d'avoir usé de la même «violence» rituelle dans son application des théories freudiennes à la culture merina, (la théorie du parricide, projetée sur le *fanjakana* – le pouvoir et ses représentants – , celle du refoulement et du transfert). Mais on se permet

aussi de croire qu'il s'agit là d'un parcours, nécessaire pour l'auteur, menant à une sorte d'union, de réconciliation, «d'amour» peut-être, interdisciplinaire, lui permettant de rétablir des ponts avec les quartiers affectifs de la culture merina et, probablement aussi, avec sa propre histoire. Ce choix permet somme toute d'effectuer de nouveaux éclairages et des mises à jour considérables sur l'interprétation du *Famadihana.*

Armand Mattelart, Armand Neveu, Erik Neveu, *Introduction aux Cultural Studies*, Paris : La Découverte, 2003, 122 pages.

Recenseur : *Jean-Frédéric Lemay*
Université Laval

L'objectif du court ouvrage de Mattelart et Neveu est de produire une synthèse de l'évolution et des transformations subies par l'un des courants de recherche ayant acquis une importance certaine pour l'anthropologie contemporaine. Cette *Introduction aux Cultural Studies* est constituée à la fois d'une description générale des auteurs, des idées et des principaux concepts et d'une analyse spécifique des débats, orientations et ouvrages ayant marqué ce courant né en Grande-Bretagne. L'aspect synthétique du livre en fait un instrument pédagogique pertinent pour les personnes cherchant à se familiariser avec les *Cultural Studies*, et un guide utile de repères permettant l'approfondissement de certaines thématiques plus spécifiques. L'ouvrage, construit de façon chronologique, poursuit trois objectifs principaux : restituer les travaux et débats importants des *Cultural Studies*; comprendre la métamorphose de la notion de culture dans le demi-siècle écoulé et rappeler l'importance de l'engagement du chercheur, qui ne constitue ni un frein au savoir ni une vision désuète de l'intellectuel engagé (p. 6).

Dans leur synthèse des principaux travaux, débats et auteurs ayant marqué le courant des *Cultural Studies*, Mattelart et Neveu proposent un contenu à la fois institutionnel, centré sur les lieux de savoir et leurs déplacements, et intellectuel, car il met l'accent sur la transformation des concepts et des objets d'intérêts pour les chercheurs. L'ouvrage est divisé en cinq grands chapitres qui couvrent chacune des périodes historiques marquantes. D'abord, les auteurs étudient la naissance des *Cultural Studies*, lors de la révolution industrielle en Grande-Bretagne, qui se sont manifestées comme critique culturelle de la société bourgeoise et, plus particulièrement, des questions de la mécanisation de la vie et des effets néfastes de la civilisation moderne. Cette première période (jusqu'à l'après Deuxième Guerre mondiale) a été marquée par trois courants principaux. D'abord, les auteurs associés au courant «*Culture and Society*», tels Hoggart, Morris et Arnold, analysèrent la question de l'identité anglaise et les effets de la révolution industrielle sur la cohé-

sion sociale. Dans l'entre-deux-guerres, les «*English Studies*» poursuivirent en ce sens par l'importance qu'ils accordèrent aux textes littéraires comme antidote à la contamination de la langue ordinaire. Après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, les pères fondateurs des *Cultural Studies* (Hoggart, Williams, Thompson et Hall) continuèrent cette réflexion à partir de la notion de résistance à l'ordre culturel industriel. Au cours des années de Birmingham (1964-1980), on vit apparaître l'institutionnalisation des *Cultural Studies*, principalement par la mise sur pied du *Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (CCCS) en 1964. Les membres désiraient utiliser les outils critiques textuels et littéraires pour l'étude des cultures de masse et des pratiques culturelles populaires. Lors de cette période, il y aura une expansion des problématiques étudiées (l'étude des médias et des milieux populaires ou l'apparition des questions de genre et de race, par exemple) et des concepts utilisés (ceux d'idéologie, d'hégémonie, de résistance et d'identité). Deux autres éléments illustrèrent cette période, soit la combinaison de la recherche et de l'engagement politique et le refus du patriotisme de discipline. La troisième période, à partir du début des années 1980, fut marquée par trois tournants principaux : d'abord, celui de la réécriture de l'histoire qui se distingua par l'utilisation de la méthode ethnographique et l'étude des notions d'encodage/décodage; le tournant épistémologique, caractérisé par un contexte post-fordiste et globalisé favorisant le retour du subjectif et l'importance des questions identitaires; et, finalement, l'apparition d'une troisième génération de chercheurs qui remirent en question la notion de résistance et insistèrent sur la réception plutôt que sur le texte. La quatrième période historique fut celle de l'internationalisation et de la crise des *Cultural Studies*. L'internationalisation est à la fois caractérisée par l'expansion géographique et le déplacement vers les États-Unis et par l'expansion thématique ainsi que la multiplication des revues et des chercheurs impliqués. Au niveau géographique, on vit apparaître les États-Unis comme lieu central de production académique, phénomène illustré, entre autres, par la transition de la tradition latino-américaine des *Estudios culturales* en Amérique latine aux *Latin American Cultural Studies* aux États-Unis. Au regard des thématiques, le tournant postmoderne (et la marginalisation des pères fondateurs) ainsi que l'importance accordée aux questions liées à l'ethnicité, à la sexualité ou aux générations émergèrent. Cette période en fut aussi une de crise illustrée par le désengagement politique, l'inflation verbeuse des travaux, la tentation populiste dirigée vers les consommateurs et la ghettoïsation de micro communautés de chercheurs regroupés par des corpus de textes particuliers. Dans le dernier chapitre, les auteurs produisent une évaluation des conditions nécessaires à un renouveau des *Cultural Studies* qui serait fondé principalement sur la nécessité de réintroduire certains éléments qui furent mis de côté : l'ancrage historique et le matérialisme culturel, l'engagement du chercheur, l'abandon des méta-discours avant-gardistes et l'exploration de nouvelles interdisciplinarités.

Au cœur de l'évolution et des transformations académiques et théoriques qu'ont connues les *Cultural Studies* se situe le concept de culture sur lequel elles reposent. La transformation de ce concept, c'est le passage d'une vision élitiste de celui-ci étant associée à la littérature, à l'art et à la connaissance (la culture comme civilisation) à une perspective plus terre à terre de la culture comme système de sens partagés et négociés. L'utilisation du sens élitiste de la culture a été principalement le fait des courants *Culture and Society* et *English Studies* qui concevaient comme nécessaire la promotion des classiques littéraires nationaux pour la consolidation d'une culture anglaise face aux menaces de contamination de la vulgarité associée à la langue ordinaire de la société mercantile. Les pères fondateurs des *Cultural Studies* se positionnèrent eux aussi en opposition aux menaces de la culture industrielle, mais dans une perspective moins élitiste, au sens où l'étude de la résistance et des (sous)cultures populaires (Willis), marginales ou prolétaires (Hoggart) deviendront leur objet d'étude principal à partir d'une approche du social par le bas, le quotidien. Avec les *Cultural Studies,* plutôt qu'un esthétisme national ou une menace mercantile abrutissante, la culture deviendra un système de valeurs négociées et contestées, principalement avec la popularisation de certains concepts, telles l'hégémonie et la résistance. Avec le tournant linguistique et textuel, les *Cultural Studies* prennent aussi un virage interprétativiste, cassant le mythe structuraliste de la résistance pour plutôt se pencher sur la notion de réception des valeurs et des éléments culturels transmis. Avec ce tournant épistémologique, le concept de culture fut inscrit dans une textualité et une inflation conceptuelle que les auteurs suggérèrent d'abandonner pour l'ancrer de nouveau dans le social à partir d'un matérialisme culturel renouvelé qui éviterait toutefois de retomber dans les excès structuralistes du passé.

Les questions liées à l'engagement politique semblent avoir une importance certaine pour les auteurs qui lient les transformations générales qu'ont connues les *Cultural Studies* à un retrait progressif vers la sphère individuelle et au cloisonnement académique (ghettoïsation). Ils insistent sur la condition de marginalité dans laquelle s'est fondé le courant des *Cultural Studies* en Grande-Bretagne ainsi que sur l'association des pères fondateurs à la mouvance politique de la nouvelle gauche (la mise sur pied de la *New Left Review* et de la *Open University,* par exemple). Ils associent ce changement d'orientation aux effets provoqués par le tournant textuel ainsi que par le contexte plus large de transformations socio-économiques liées au virage conservateur, au post-fordisme et à la globalisation amorcés au début des années 1980. Ce phénomène aurait été illustré, par exemple, par l'acquiescement aux privatisations et à la déréglementation du secteur des communications en Grande-Bretagne sous couvert d'une apologie du plaisir ordinaire. Sans rejeter certaines études importantes produites au sein des *Cultural Studies* (celles du courant postcolonial, entre autres), ils insistent sur l'importance d'une dissociation de la discursivité

excessive (*globaloney*) et du populisme consumériste pour un ré-engagement des chercheurs au sein du social : par exemple, aux côtés de la mouvance anti-mondialiste, qui a mis la culture et la diversité culturelle au centre de ses luttes.

De façon générale, Mattelart et Neveu atteignent de façon satisfaisante les trois objectifs qu'ils s'étaient fixés en parvenant à nous présenter à la fois l'évolution institutionnelle et intellectuelle des *Cultural Studies,* ainsi que les transformations subies par le concept de culture et par la notion d'engagement politique. D'ailleurs, l'une des forces majeures de cet ouvrage réside dans la capacité de synthèse et de critique des auteurs qui résument une quantité importante de phénomènes, débats et développements théoriques en un nombre limité de pages tout en produisant un bilan critique et en offrant des pistes de réflexion pour le développement futur de ce champ d'étude. L'un des points importants de cette réussite réside dans la forme plutôt que dans le fond. En effet, le texte garde sa cohérence et sa fluidité par l'utilisation récurrente d'encadrés dans lesquels sont présentés des auteurs, des débats ou des courants théoriques plus particuliers, qui ont pu être secondaires, mais qui ont influencé le développement des *Cultural Studies.* D'ailleurs, ces encadrés constituent un instrument pédagogique utile, puisqu'ils permettent aux personnes intéressées à des sujets plus particuliers de cibler les auteurs et ouvrages importants. Ce livre, dont l'objectif premier était d'offrir une courte synthèse autour d'une question particulière, y réussit pleinement. Toutefois, il faut noter que certaines affirmations des auteurs tendent, parfois, vers la généralité (elles s'avèrent même douteuses dans un cas précis : l'affirmation de la dominance des universités privées dans le réseau universitaire canadien, alors que le financement est public (p. 74), ce qui ne remet toutefois pas en question la pertinence et la qualité générale de l'ouvrage.

Bryan D. Palmer, *Cultures of Darkness. Night Travels in the Histories of Transgression (From Medieval to Modern),* New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000, xiii + 609 pages.

Reviewer: *Gavin Smith*
University of Toronto

"A gamble to admire, a pleasure to read, a provocation to think." Such was Perry Anderson's view of Carlo Ginzberg's work, quoted here (p. 55), and so too could Palmer's book be described. With an established reputation as one of Canada's foremost labour historians, Palmer, who has also produced a study of E.P .Thompson and a critique of the "descent into discourse" in the humanities and social sciences, here turns his attention to how transgressions and mysteries beyond the glare of light are simultaneously "externally imposed [and] also internally, subjectively constituted." From pirates to pornography, from blues to Breugel this is a kaleidoscopic

ride taken with a word-master of magnificent mastery. It is at times hard to decide if the excitement of turning a page comes from anticipation of the next adventure into the weird and wonderful or a fascination with Palmer's almost infinite ability to turn a phrase.

Oddly enough, for this reader at least—perhaps too habituated in the pedestrian reading of the social scientist—two feelings pulled against one another on first encountering the book: excitement at its originality and promise, and a daunting sense that one might get lost within the thickets of this so-unfamiliar forest. It was my son who helped, reminding me that halfway into the forest, the dog is already on its way out—and so I leapt in. And soon realized that I should have been reassured from the start by my older familiarity with Palmer's now well-established descriptive and argumentative skills. At first glance we seemed to be going anywhere, like a ride in Harry Potter's old Ford Anglia, but then we begin to realize that what this book does is lift the rock of oppression's weight, the rock so well studied in Palmer's earlier works, to allow a glimpse of the activities beneath. In his own words, "[The] book...does not so much champion marginalization and transgression as acknowledge their *coerced* being, explore their cultural resiliences, and suggest that their historicized presence, constrained limitations, and capacities to articulate a challenge to ensconced power are never islands in themselves. They are always reciprocally related to the material world of production and exchange..." (p. 457).

And so, it turns out, the book carries us forward through epochs and transformations, the escapes from regimented normality and the shrieking articulations of crises—as witches and peasants witness the ancien regime's collapse, and then the early search for revolution is expressed through the prodding offenses of pornography or the wild flights of fantasy. By a third of the way through the book we find ourselves in early capitalism, its time, its spaces and the movements between: the "dark and dangerous labours [of] productions of the night," the emergence of the "dark continents [of] empire and race" and the slipping-between of pirates and maroons. Then capitalism's gendered power grows ever bigger and more rigid as its regnant climax is reached—bomb-throwers and the devil light up the shadowy night. Almost two-thirds of the way through the book, we begin to meet the transgressive expressions of capitalism's plodding permanence, both within the heart of the beast and at its furthest reaches as well. Here the insights of the historian only too familiar with the sweated regimentations of labour and the struggles for collective solidarity throws a penetrating light on the expressive individualities of blues, beats and noir and the tragic possibilities of bandits, rage and riot.

A work that will stimulate the teacher seeking a new way of presenting witchcraft or ritual and that will draw students into a world of reality that exposes the limits of their imaginations, Palmer's book is at its best in my view when the author is enmeshed with the working people and political activists that he so evidently admires and so splendidly rep-

resents in these pages. The bias could be mine though. Here after all is a writer whose glistening prose had given substance to my unease with the cultural turn in every discipline from anthropology to zoology, now taking my hand and steering me through the darkness with the ever brighter torch of...culture itself. Strange and unpredictable are the twists and turns of night travels with Palmer. Where will this bibliophile *par excellence* take us next on his adventures into history through the world of books?

Caroline Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002, xii + 265 pages.

Reviewer: *Alan Smart*
University of Calgary

The "unmaking" of Soviet life is at the same time the construction of new ways of enduring and comprehending the post-socialist condition. In this volume, Caroline Humphrey points out the limitation of the idea of "transition" since it invalidly implies knowledge of where the society is going. Instead, she draws on her long experience with detailed fieldwork in Russia and Mongolia to provide incisive and provocative sketches of poorly understood facets of daily life. These essays make it very clear that whatever is emerging is internally complex, simultaneously building on the past (both Soviet and pre-Soviet) and rejecting it, and takes very distinct forms in different places and for different groups.

The book is a collection of previously published essays (except for one chapter on the domestic mode of production) supplemented by a new introduction by Humphrey and several short section introductions and a preface by the editors of the series "Culture and Society after Socialism." The essays originally appeared between 1991 and 2000, and we often see themes briefly introduced in an early essay explored in considerable depth in later ones. This gives a sense of a developing vision, but generally later accounts expand rather than overturn previous analyses. The series editors' short introductions also provide a clearer idea of the broader relevance and the connections between the different essays.

Humphrey's theoretical approach sees both cultural determinism and rational choice as inadequate. Instead, she explores the various ways in which previous modes of life and routines constitute repertoires by which people can organize their activities and understand their lives. At the same time, their repertoire is also being enhanced. A good example of this is the final essay on urban shamanism, where traditions are selectively emphasized and reinterpreted. The majority of the essays deal either with illegal practices, such as bribery, protection rackets and theft, or with consumption practices and their relationship to changing forms of person-

hood. Both sets of essays illustrate, among many other points, disjunctions between legality and legitimacy. For example, the conspicuous consumption of "New Russians" who make their money in the private economy are more widely despised than are officials who extract tribute, while bribery is seen as not being possible between friends. These essays show the interconnections between different kinds of moral evaluations in post-Soviet Russia: just considering bribery without considering how coping strategies are understood and legitimated is inadequate and cannot provide a foundation for effective policy decisions.

Overall, this is an exciting and solid volume, clearly enough written for senior undergraduates. Besides courses on the former Soviet Union, it would also be appropriate for courses on social change or economic anthropology. As a collection of essays, it leaves out many important issues and elements, but hopefully a new monograph will be forthcoming soon from this experienced observer of the Russian social and moral landscape.

Mike Davis, *Génocides Tropicaux. Catastrophes naturelles et famines coloniales. Aux origines du sous-développement*, traduit de l'anglais par Marc Saint-Upéry, Paris : La Découverte, 2003, 479 pages.

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Mike Davis est un auteur pour le moins éclectique. Parmi ses ouvrages précédents il a publié *City of Quartz, Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (Verso, 1990), livre qui raconte l'histoire du développement de la ville de Los Angeles et qui lui valut une certaine renommée comme chercheur indépendant. Dans *Génocides tropicaux*, Davis s'attaque à un sujet fort distinct mais de taille et qui selon lui n'a pas eu sa juste place dans les sciences sociales, à savoir l'histoire politique et environnementale des famines à la fin de l'ère victorienne. Si l'entreprise paraît vaste, Davis ne lésine pas : en près cinq cents pages abondantes en détails et citations de sources de l'époque, ce livre offre un panorama riche et complexe d'une réalité sans doute méconnue.

Comme le suggère le titre, cet ouvrage concerne l'hécatombe d'une bonne partie de «l'humanité tropicale», entre trente et soixante millions de personnes plus précisément, au moment même où le grand empire colonial de l'époque proclamait sa *Pax Britannica*. D'ailleurs, si une image vaut mille mots, d'emblée les photos en couverture disent qui sont les protagonistes de cette triste histoire : en haut le vice-roi aux Indes, Lord Lytton, est majestueusement assis entouré de ses serviteurs indiens, en bas, une famille décharnée fixe d'un air hagard une caméra coloniale. Selon Davis, «l'interprétation conventionnelle de l'histoire économique» du XIXème siècle, et surtout de son dernier quart, ne rend pas justice aux causes naturelles et politiques qui sont à l'origine de cette tra-

gédie. Est-ce là une cécité volontaire? Davis ne se prononce pas, mais il trouve profondément signifiant l'ampleur du silence des historiens à cet égard (p. 14). Aussi son approche est-elle celle d'une «écologie politique de la famine» dans laquelle l'histoire environnementale et l'économie politique marxiste sont mises à contribution (p. 22). Mais on aurait tort de croire que Davis relate une histoire de l'environnement trop linéaire; il réinscrit plutôt l'environnement dans le devenir historique de populations rurales pauvres de l'Inde, de la Chine et du Brésil – les trois études de cas principales étudiées ici – mais aussi à partir d'exemples éthiopiens, algériens, indonésiens et philippins, pour ne nommer que ceux-là.

Une écologie politique donc, où la famine et les ravages qui lui succèdent ne s'expliquent pas à partir du seul facteur environnemental, mais aussi en fonction des orientations et décisions politiques (rudes et austères) des instances au pouvoir. Aussi le travail de Davis se rattache-t-il à une école de pensée fort active actuellement qui postule, à juste titre d'ailleurs, que les désastres ne sont pas nécessairement «naturels». Ce qu'il faut entendre par là est qu'un événement perturbateur d'origine naturelle, comme un tremblement de terre ou un ouragan, ne peut expliquer à lui seul l'ampleur souvent phénoménale d'une catastrophe. Les maux sociaux qui s'ensuivent (destructions d'infrastructures, épidémies, déplacements massifs de populations et décès) ont plus souvent une origine sociale et c'est l'usage humain de l'environnement qu'il faut analyser dès lors. Si telle est bien la thèse de Davis dans ces pages, il ne s'attarde guère aux apports récents en la matière. De même, son argumentation théorique n'est pas très étayée, dans le sens où il préfère nous faire la démonstration de sa thèse par des études de cas. Bien que ces dernières soient finement présentées, avec maintes citations et notes de bas de pages à l'appui, la portée théorique de l'ouvrage aurait sans doute bénéficié d'un chapitre à part entière. En effet, Davis présente ce qu'il entend par «écologie politique» uniquement dans les dernières pages de sa courte introduction.

Cela dit, ce livre est bon, dense et accessible. La première partie du livre illustre à quel point fut nocive «l'interaction maléfique entre des phénomènes climatiques et des processus économiques» de 1875 à 1900 dans différentes régions du globe qui étaient forts sujettes aux effets perturbateurs de ce que nous connaissons aujourd'hui comme El Niño.

En commençant par le cas des famines de 1876-78 qui frappèrent à la fois l'Inde, la Chine et le Brésil, ainsi que d'autres régions tropicales du globe, Davis démontre combien l'expansion du capitalisme libéral, combinée aux graves sécheresses causées par de terribles vagues d'El Niño, fut meurtrier. Digne d'un enfer dantesque, Davis nous projette alors dans le Deccan indien où des centaines de milliers de pauvres périrent tandis que les réserves de céréales attendaient dans les comptoirs coloniaux avant d'être transportées à la métropole britannique. Parce qu'elles suivaient aveuglément l'orthodoxie utilitariste d'Adam Smith (qui avait bien indiqué dans la *Richesse des Nations* qu'il s'oppo-

sait à tout contrôle des prix en cas de disette), de Bentham et de Malthus, les autorités britanniques optèrent pour un laisser-faire quasi complet en terme d'aide humanitaire «envers une masse d'individus à peau sombre» (p. 47). Dit autrement, l'Inde devait rester un grenier pour Londres et Manchester, une réserve fiscale de l'Empire et ce, peu importe les «coûts humains». Certes, d'illustres personnes comme Florence Nightingale tentèrent d'apporter des secours aux victimes, mais devant l'inflexibilité de Lytton et d'autres, ces efforts philanthropiques furent plutôt vains. Le cas de la Chine des Qing est aussi révélateur. Davis explique comment les paysans du Nord périrent par centaines de milliers tandis que les secours ne pouvaient être acheminés faute de voies de transports viables. L'Empire des Qing avait été affaibli par une série de révoltes et d'insurrections durant les années 1850 (comme celle des Taïping) et la corruption a progressivement sclérosé une bureaucratie qui auparavant se flattait d'être fort efficace eu égard à la protection des populations rurales. Enfin, dans le *sertão* du Nordeste brésilien la *Grande seca* de 1877 débuta six mois après celle de l'Inde. Là aussi une histoire d'horreur se répète : si les spécialistes ont déclaré plus tard que cette famine était due entre autres à la déforestation, la fin de la culture du coton dans cette région obligea une bonne partie de la population à trouver d'autres moyens de subsistance ailleurs en provoquant parfois émeutes et violences. Le manque de céréales et surtout, comme pour les cas de l'Inde et de la Chine, l'inaptitude des mécanismes du marché (montée des prix en flèches pour des denrées de base si bien que seuls les riches peuvent se les procurer) causèrent l'exode massif de paysans vers les côtes au grand effroi des autorités – qui en embarquèrent une partie sur des convois en route vers le Sud comme esclaves. Bien qu'une certaine forme d'aide aux sinistrés avait été acheminée vers le *sertão*, elle s'avéra bien insuffisante devant l'ampleur du désastre.

La triade pauvreté/écologie/politique est au cœur de la thèse de Davis. Il en poursuit le développement lors des seconde et troisième vagues de grande sécheresse (El Niño) alternée de moussons excessives (phénomène La Niña) au tournant du XXe siècle (1888-91 et 1896-1902). Encore une fois l'Inde, la Chine et le Brésil sont dramatiquement frappés. Un thème intéressant que Davis mentionne est la conjonction entre mouvements millénaristes et famines. Par exemple, lors des terribles inondations dans les provinces de Hebei, Shandong et Hénan qui succédèrent à une sécheresse des plus sévères (1897-98), Davis rapporte comment de nombreux paysans chinois fuyant les crues considéraient les missionnaires chrétiens et les administrateurs pro-catholiques responsables du cataclysme : ils avait mis «le ciel en bouteille». Le souvenir de millions de cadavres de la sécheresse de 1877 ne faisait qu'attiser le ressentiment et la révolte, comme celle des Boxers autour de 1900. Cette fameuse rébellion doit se comprendre dans ce contexte. En effet Davis explique comment de nombreux paysans en colère devant l'inaction des autorités se sont ralliés à la cause des Boxers qui obligeaient

les chrétiens et les étrangers plus riches (mais pas uniquement eux) à céder de leurs réserves au nom «d'un partage équitable des céréales» (p. 202). Quant au Brésil, le *sertão* avait été le creuset de divers renouveaux religieux comme le «sébastianisme» (croyance dans le retour du monarque portugais disparu en 1578). Les grandes sécheresses et les famines de la fin du XIXème siècle avivèrent les visions exaltées de *beatos* et *beatas* du Nordeste. Ces millénarismes sont l'expression de bouleversements sociaux d'envergure. Davis mentionne le cas d'une communauté millénariste autonome (celle de Canudos dirigée par Conselheiro) qui accueillit de nombreux réfugiés de la sécheresse. Située en retrait des villes et en retrait de l'idéologie du progrès positiviste qui enthousiasmait les dirigeants brésiliens de l'époque, ces derniers considéraient l'expérience d'une «communauté chrétienne de base» comme la manifestation d'un communisme intolérable. Il fallut pas moins de quatre expéditions du gouvernement fédéral pour faire tomber les «fanatiques» de Canudos en 1897. Davis poursuit avec des exemples tirés de l'Asie (où des révoltes nationalistes coïncidèrent avec les cycles de sécheresse comme aux Philippines) et de l'Afrique (Kenya, Ouganda, Mozambique). Or le point à retenir ici est le fait que des conditions climatiques extrêmes (sécheresses et moussons) engendrent parfois des soulèvements populaires qui sont alors fortement réprimés par les autorités coloniales, ce qui fait dire à Davis que des famines peuvent devenir des outils au service d'une politique impérialiste.

La troisième section de cette monographie concerne plus spécifiquement le phénomène d'oscillation australe El Niño (ENSO). En deux chapitres plus techniques mais forts intéressants, Davis en retrace pas à pas la longue découverte. Les savants du XIXème siècle constataient bien la convergence des sécheresses et des moussons un peu partout sur le globe qui caractérisent ENSO, mais ils n'avaient pas encore les outils nécessaires pour en comprendre le mécanisme ni pour en prédire la manifestation. Basé sur «les oscillations géantes de la température océanique et de la pression atmosphérique du Pacifique», ENSO demeura évasif jusqu'en 1960. Depuis, les recherches sur ce sujet se sont multipliées et n'oublions pas qu'après le cycle des saisons, il demeure le phénomène de variabilité climatique le plus important de la planète. Davis nous offre ici une véritable introduction à l'histoire de la science climatologique et de ses dernières découvertes (sa structure temporelle, l'amplitude de ses variations, ses corrélations avec d'autres oscillations régionales). Il retrace également l'histoire climatologique des différentes régions du monde à la lumière des vagues d'El Niño, mais se garde bien de considérer ce dernier tel un genre de *deus ex machina* qui permettrait d'expliquer toutes les sécheresses qui sévirent.

La dernière partie de *Génocides tropicaux* est sans doute la section où Davis expose au mieux son écologie politique de la famine. En reprenant ses trois principales études de cas, l'auteur montre comment l'introduction de monocultures comme le coton et le blé ainsi que l'expansion de l'agriculture d'exportation, certes bien profitables pour les autorités impé-

riales de l'ère victorienne, ont appauvri les terres arables de nombreux pays du Sud à un point tel que lorsque des phéno-mènes climatiques d'envergure se produisaient, ils ruinaient les champs pour des années à venir. Dans ces trois exemples, Davis accorde une attention particulière à la formation de l'État comme centrale décisionnelle quant aux processus éco-nomiques et la gestion des effets pervers du climat. Si entre 30 et 60 millions de victimes ont succombé durant le dernier quart du XIXème siècle, c'est bien souvent à l'État (colonial) que revient le blâme. Aussi, Davis considère que ces événe-ments tragiques, au croisement de l'écologie et la politique, ont grandement contribué à la structuration de que nous appelons encore parfois de nos jours le tiers-monde. Il démontre com-ment les économies coloniales étaient fortement reliées entre elles et ce d'un continent à l'autre, comme en témoigne le cours des prix des denrées premières affectant les producteurs bré-siliens autant qu'indiens. L'adoption de l'étalon or, le contrôle des termes de l'échange par les métropoles occidentales, l'im-position d'un ordre économique «libéral» et d'un modèle exportateur mettant en danger la survie alimentaire des popu-lations paysannes, les exigences des collecteurs d'impôts, les déficits commerciaux croissants de la Chine et le d'Inde, les insuffisances hydrographiques et autres dues à la surexploita-tion agricole, tels sont quelques-uns des facteurs à l'origine de «l'apparition» de la «pauvreté systémique» du tiers-monde. En fait, nous sommes devant un premier processus de mon-dialisation, devant un «système-monde» où des transforma-tions de l'économie mondiale, des perturbations climatiques sans précédent et l'apogée de l'impérialisme forment une con-jonction dévastatrice. Cette description nous paraîtra sans doute familière : un siècle plus tard au tournant du millénaire, nous retrouvons encore et toujours cette trilogie pernicieuse. Sans doute Davis a-t-il tendance à trop réifier un binôme que l'anthropologie a voulu défaire, à savoir celui entre l'étranger pauvre versus l'Européen colonisateur (en omettant de parler de tous les intermédiaires locaux qui participèrent à la relation coloniale) mais ce livre nous invite tout de même à replonger dans les archives de ce passé colonial pour mieux comprendre la formation de la pauvreté dans le monde. Les thèmes qu'il explore demeurent toujours d'actualité afin de mettre en lumière des événements que l'on pourrait trop rapidement réduire à leur dimension de «désastre naturel» alors qu'ils ne sont justement pas fonction des seuls aléas de la nature.

Will C. van den Hoonaard (ed.), *Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers,* Toronto: Univer-sity of Toronto Press, 2002, 240 pages.

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Most of us who research social and cultural life face an insti-tutional ethics review process that many find alien to the ethnographic tradition. Many anthropologists have been stymied by research ethics boards, and those of us who have sat on REBs often feel pressure to justify our methodologi-cal ethos in an environment dominated by the quantitative and medical sciences. As well, ethical review of research often seems an exegesis of the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct rather than a close consideration on the ethical practice of research. There is, quite appropriately, considerable resentment and resistance to institutional ethi-cal review in Canadian universities, and social scientists are coming forward to voice their concerns. Will van den Hoonaard's edited volume, *Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers*, aptly encompasses the growing dissatisfaction with the Tri-Council policy, and illus-trates the how many ethical issues implicit in qualitative methodology were not anticipated by the policy's architects.

Walking the Tightrope is a product of the Qualitative Analysis Conferences of 1999 and 2000, and the editor has taken care to arrange the contributions in such an order that they complement and quite often provocatively contradict one another. The shadow of the Tri-Council Policy looms large in most of the chapters, beginning with van den Hoonaard's introduction that broadly sketches the tensions between qualitative research and institutional ethical review. In some of the chapters, the tension becomes unbearable. Some of the authors air specific grievances over unsympa-thetic treatment by REBs that reveals their own lack of understanding about ethical review while others provide engaging discussions on the theoretical and practical impli-cations of ethical research.

In the first chapter, Patrick O'Neill evaluates several recent cases in which participant confidentiality, a corner-stone of the Tri-Council Policy, could not be adequately main-tained by researchers because of the legal implications of the data collected. Most infamously was the Ogden case, in which a Simon Fraser University researcher refused to divulge the identity of a participant of a project on assisted suicide to a provincial coroner. In the aftermath of the legal battle (which the researcher won), SFU began to insist that researchers absolutely guarantee confidentiality before ethical approval was granted. Providing such absolute guarantees, based on our ability to accurately predict the effects of the knowledge that we generate, is, however, often impossible. When SFU judged that the potential for legal suspension of participant confidentiality existed, the institutional response was to cen-sor such research. This had enormous consequences for much research in social work and criminology, as well as anthropological investigations in controversial areas. O'Neill, happily, provides a legal remedy for this dilemma, and argues that universities should be compelled to support their own scholars when they are challenged in the courts.

A number of the subsequent chapters take aim at the shortcomings of the Tri-Council policy in Canada, and pro-vide a comparative view of the situation in the United States and the United Kingdom. In her chapter, Florence Kellner

argues that the Tri-Council Policy as an ethical code does little to promote the particular morality that obligates researchers to protect the welfare of their participants. Patricia and Peter Adler follow with their charge that Institutional Review Boards in the United States are more concerned about liability to the university than the welfare of participants. They describe an "Orwellian atmosphere" in the United States that polices and inhibits research. Melanie Pearce echoes the Adlers with a personal account of how an ethics committee in the United Kingdom insisted on draconian changes to her dissertation research methodology based on the quantitative format preferred by the committee. John Johnston and David Altheide's chapter argues that the extension of policing powers to Institutional Review Boards must be seen as an aspect of post-industrial risk society, as more and more areas of social life are subjected to surveillance in light of our expanding knowledge of socially engineered risk. They question the ability of institutional review agencies to enforce ethical practices in a way that is attentive to "the lowest or most concrete levels of interaction," and call us to resist ethical review processes, based on the perception that intellectual freedoms are under threat.

The cumulative effect of these chapters is to portray REBs, and their international equivalents, as imposing forces that censor and delay qualitative research, and to argue forcefully for a particular and flexible morality of research. This is not impossible within the Tri-Council framework, however; the Adler's description of the American context as "Orwellian" does not describe the situation north of the border, where the Tri-Council Policy is described even by its critics as an evolving document in which there is plenty of scope for change. It is Foucault rather than Orwell who might help us characterize the situation in Canada. The authority of the Tri-Council, to the extent it exists at all, is valorized in the locally made interpretations of university REBs that are, after all, constituted by our peers.

Some of the most interesting material in this collection comes from a number of scholars who explore the implications of ethical research practices in their own work. One of the dangers of the institutional review is that it may trivialize the process of gaining participant confidentiality and anonymity by rendering this as only a matter of following a format for a letter of consent. Linda Snyder, in her chapter, shows how intentions to protect the privacy of participants in a study that compared employment initiatives for women in Canada and Chile were compromised by situations in which key participants were well-known public figures, and when participants recognized the voice of other participants in interview transcripts. Snyder points out that ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in "constructivist" research designs requires additional measures beyond what is prescribed by the Tri-Council code. Similarly, Merlinda Weinberg provides an engaging discussion in her chapter of how her research in an institutional setting for single women and their newborn babies introduced a series of unanticipated

ethical dilemmas. Caught between the management of the institution (in which she had been an "insider") and the clientele, Weinberg was forced to make difficult decisions about revealing pertinent research data and potentially undermining the trust that participants had in her. Ethical codes, she writes, say little about those cases where our intentions to protect the anonymity of participants contradicts our obligation to the institutional sponsors of our work. Weinberg echoes Snyder's call for a consideration of research ethics that is attentive to particular contexts and is less formalized, something that seems inconsistent with generalized ethical codes.

The next four chapters in this collection deal, in one way or another, with the imbalances of power between researchers and participants that lay at the heart of most of the ethical judgments we make. S. Anthony Thompson shows how assumptions of participant informed consent break down where participants are intellectually disabled, and when the dynamics of power between able-bodied researchers and institutionally marginalized participants are fraught with risks to the latter. Thompson's insistence that we carefully consider the competency of intellectually disabled participants to give consent and develop protocols to protect them against exploitation by researchers ought to resonate with any researcher who works with people with whom relations of dependency or subordination exists—students, patients, inmates or indeed with any population that is separated from the researcher by barriers that may compromise the ability to freely give consent. Thompson argues that gaining consent must be an ongoing process for disadvantaged populations, and also warns that the assumption of a lack of competency risks denying them the ability to freely participate.

Erin Mills also explores the power-laden boundary of researcher and participant in her chapter in which she explores the ethical implications of imposing interpretations on life histories constructed from interview transcripts. Mills takes up the issue of voice in qualitative research and concludes by stating that interpretations of life history data are not a monological imposition on another's discourse but an autoethnographic negotiation of meaning between the researcher and subject. This carries with it ethical obligations that are far more germane to the practice of ethnographic research than are the constraints imposed by the Tri-Council code, which tend to treat researcher/participant relationships rather mechanically. In the next chapter, Mary Stratton discusses her difficulties in having a participatory action research project involving students approved, and the further challenges she had in achieving the participatory ideal in a closed institution that impeded student participation. Stratton warns the assumption of equality between researcher and participants is often undermined by institutional constraints, but also notes that the democratic ideal of participatory research is one that should be defended by researchers who work with subordinate populations. Michael Unger and Gillian Nichol approach the problem of power

imbalance as social workers working under a *standard of practice* that has much in common with the precepts of qualitative research raised by the many authors of this volume. Unger and Nichol argue that qualitative research is a "method of resistance" for the marginalized, particularly those marginalized by dominant scientific discourse. The synergy between the human services and qualitative research exists primarily because of the flexibility and reflexivity that characterizes qualitative work. Ethical research, for them, is work that both circumscribes and emancipates forms of "indigenous knowledge" rarely voiced in positivistic social science.

The last two chapters of this collection deal with ethical issues in virtual research. This superficially topical subject matter exposes some of the thornier issues surrounding the protection of participant privacy in research that many ethnographers will recognize. How private are usenet contributions? How can researchers ethically access this data, and must this new form of research be subjected to institutional ethical scrutiny. Both Barbara Theresa Waruszynski and Heather Kitchin note the similarity between newsgroup activity and public spaces in which anthropologists conduct participant observation, and both question the degree to which human behaviour in either cyber or public space can be taken as public behaviour that can be observed without institutional ethical oversight. Waruszynski argues for a careful consideration of how private the "public" contributions to news and discussion groups really are, and for researchers to take the same care studying these groups, as do ethnographers engaged in participant observation. Kitchin, on the other hand, states that cyber statements are public data, pure and simple, and that usenet research can become attractive to those who regard Tri-Council constraints as intrusive and not suited to qualitative research. Kitchin's argument that usenet contributions can be studied as a form of "naturalistic observation" and thus do not require institutional oversight is troubling, as we really ought to consider that usenet contributors may not know just how "public" their statements are. The Tri-Council code, moreover, does not wholly excuse "naturalistic observation" from ethical review, particularly when the observer is known to the participants.

Many of the authors in this volume yearn for a world in which what we do as researchers is not subjected to institutional oversight, particularly by those not sympathetic to qualitative methods. In the summary chapter at the end of this book, the sense that qualitative research is a both a subordinate and uniquely human epistemology is further sharpened. Will van den Hoonaard calls for a separate ethical review process for qualitative researchers; but this emancipation is unlikely to ever be achieved in the current institutional environment. This separation of review processes, moreover, would risk further marginalizing qualitative research from important public policy debates that continues to be dominated by quantitative knowledge. The Tri-Council

Policy is also not the authoritative, univocal document that is assumed by much of this book. As I write, the Interagency Advisory Panel Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee is winding up consultations with researchers from universities across Canada. The committee, which includes several contributors to *Walking the Tightrope,* is set to recommend changes to the Tri-Council Policy that will further accommodate qualitative and ethnographic research. That said, *Walking the Tightrope* makes for stimulating reading for students and researchers beginning to consider the ethical implications of their work, and ought to be required reading for anyone who is a member of an institutional REB that reviews qualitative or ethnographic research.

Emmanuel Désveaux (dir.), *Alaska Kodiak. Les masques de la collection Alphonse Pinart,* Éditions Adam Biro et Musée du Quai Branly : Paris, 255 pages.

Recenseur : *Murielle Nagy*
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Un très beau livre que celui récemment publié sur les masques de la collection Alphonse Pinart. Il s'agit en fait de la publication accompagnant l'exposition présentée au musée national des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie à Paris du 6 novembre 2002 au 20 janvier 2003. La grande majorité de cette collection provient de l'île de Kodiak en Alaska et fait maintenant partie du Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer. Le livre est abondamment illustré par de magnifiques photographies des masques et on y retrouve neuf chapitres ainsi qu'un catalogue raisonné. Le personnage central y est le français Alphonse Pinart qui en 1871, à l'âge de dix-neuf ans, quitta sa ville natale – Marquise dans le Pas-de-Calais – pour aller en Alaska faire de la recherche ethnographique. Sa rencontre quatre ans plus tôt avec le célèbre mexicaniste, et abbé, Brasseur de Bourbourg lors de l'Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris allait bouleverser sa vie. Comme nous l'explique Emmanuel Désveaux dans son avant-propos, dès lors, Pinart n'eut qu'un but : partir en Alaska pour y étudier les langues autochtones et prouver que le peuplement initial du Nouveau Monde s'était fait de la Sibérie. Cette idée avait à l'époque peu d'adhérants, comme le missionnaire oblat Émile Petitot dont les dictionnaires sur les langues athabascanes et inuit seront d'ailleurs publiés par Pinart en 1876.

Revenons au livre et laissons-nous guider par quelques uns des chapitres qu'il contient. Dans *Un Français en Alaska,* Félix Torres retrace brièvement la vie de Pinart à partir de son séjour en Alaska. Ce dernier dura un an : du printemps 1871 au printemps 1872. Pinart en ramena une soixantaine de masques provenant de l'archipel de Kodiak ainsi que huit masques trouvés dans une sépulture de la caverne d'Akhanh sur l'île d'Unga dans les îles aléoutiennes.

Précisons que l'archipel de Kodiak et la péninsule d'Alaska sont habités par les Sugpiaq qui se définissent de plus en plus d'Alutiiq et se distinguent des Aléoutes (qui se désignent eux-mêmes comme Unangan) des îles aléoutiennes situées à l'extrémité ouest de la péninsule d'Alaska (p. 26; voir aussi le chapitre de Torres intitulé *Aléoutes, Sugpiaq, Chugach, Alutiiq: des identités recomposées*). Pinart parle le russe comme plusieurs de ses interlocuteurs car n'oublions pas que l'Alaska fit partie de l'empire russe de la seconde moitié du 18e siècle à 1867, année où elle fut achetée par les États-Unis. Mais comment Pinart a-t-il réussi à se faire donner des masques aussi uniques? D'après Torres, suite à une épidémie en 1837-38, ce qui reste de la société traditionnelle kodiak s'effondre dans les années 1849-50. Les grands festivals disparaissent et les masques-esprits commencent à devenir des objets inanimés que l'on ne fabrique plus. «Voici pourquoi on les donne volontiers à ce jeune français si désireux d'en entendre raconter les mythes dont l'utilité s'estompe» (p. 29). Ceci-dit, on se demande à quel degré la société traditionnelle kodiak avait été transformée puisque Pinart assista quand même chez les Sugpiaq – qui auraient été plus tardivement convertis au christianisme orthodoxe que les Aléoutes – à un festival de chasse et recueillit des informations concernant les chants, danses et récits associés à des masques.

Malgré l'imposante collection qu'il ramena en France et les données linguistiques et ethnographiques qu'il recueillit en Alaska, Torres insiste sur le fait que Pinart n'explore ni ne découvre de contrée nouvelle.[1] Il recevra pourtant, lors de son retour en France en 1873, la médaille d'or pour «la plus grande découverte faite dans le monde» remise par la Société de géographie. La même année, Pinart part en Russie pour deux ans afin de continuer ses recherches sur la filiation entre les populations du nord-est de l'Asie et celles du nord-ouest de l'Amérique. De 1875 à 1900, Pinart s'intéressa successivement aux Indiens des États-Unis, à l'Océanie et à l'île de Pâques. En 1911, il meurt et sombre dans l'oubli tout comme la collection d'objets offerte à Boulogne-Sur-Mer.

Comme l'explique la directrice du Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, Françoise Camille Halley-des-Fontaines-Poiret dans son chapitre intitulé *Le destin de la collection Pinart (1871-2001)*, la collection Pinart a miraculeusement survécu aux ravages des deux guerres mondiales. Cette collection, qui comprenait plus de 300 pièces, fut d'abord présentée au Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle à Paris lors du retour de Pinart en 1872. L'ethnologue et américaniste Ernest Hamy, alors secrétaire de la Société anthropologique du Muséum de Paris[2], convaincra Pinart de faire don de sa collection à sa ville natale, Boulogne-sur-Mer. La collection Pinart ne semble pourtant pas avoir été exposée au grand public avant 1947 lorsque le musée de l'Homme emprunte les principaux masques de la collection pour le Congrès international des américanistes. Dix ans plus tard, Évelyne Lot-Falck signe le premier article sur la collection Pinart dans le *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*.

Comme nous le fait remarquer Rosa G. Liapounova dans son chapitre intitulé *Les «mystères» et autres «jeux» de Kodiak*, quelques trente ans avant le voyage de Pinart, le naturaliste russe Il'ia Voznessienski avait exploré les côtes occidentales de l'Amérique du Nord pour le compte des musées de l'Académie des sciences de Saint-Petersbourg et avait rapporté une très importante collection de masques et d'objets rituels de Kodiak. D'où l'intérêt de Pinart à visiter les musées russes après son retour de l'Alaska. D'autres sources russes contiennent des observations relatives aux cérémonies de Kodiak. D'après le livre de Gavriil Davydov publié en 1892, les cérémonies renvoyaient à des rites de chasse, à la commémoration des morts, à la célébration de la guerre (passée ou à venir) et à l'investiture d'un chef. Le cycle rituel commençait en novembre ou décembre et se poursuivait aussi longtemps que le permettaient les réserves de nourriture (p. 33).

Puisque des chercheurs russes passèrent avant lui, quelle est donc la contribution de Pinart dans l'ethnographie des masques de Kodiak? À lire le chapitre de Dominique Desson, *Les masques et leurs textes (fragments d'une ethnographie pinartienne)*, on comprend que Pinart a non seulement recueilli les explications des Sugpiaq concernant l'origine des masques, il a aussi décrit une cérémonie avec masques et chants à laquelle il assista dans le village d'Uyak (baie de Larsen)[3] de l'île de Kodiak en février 1872. Grâce aux manuscrits de Pinart, Desson nous présente la description d'une représentation en 13 actes faisant partie d'un festival. Suivent ensuite des notes inédites que Pinart recueillit dans l'archipel Kodiak concernant 17 chants et danses, ainsi que les 20 masques qui y étaient associés (certains étant utilisés par paires) et quatre légendes associées à des masques spécifiques. On réalise donc combien le travail de Pinart est important puisqu'il contextualise les masques. Malheureusement, bien que des photos de masques soient insérées dans ce chapitre, elles ne sont identifiées que par leur numéro de catalogue et il n'est pas évident de savoir à quels chant et danse, ou à quelle légende, les masques étaient associés. Il faut donc pour chaque photo vérifier le catalogue raisonné à la fin du livre. Le numéro du catalogue correspondant au masque, et donc à la photographie, aurait dû tout simplement être indiqué dans le texte. Notons aussi la présence d'un chapitre intitulé *Notes de terrain, 1871-1872*. Il s'agit d'une traduction des notes rédigées en russe à Kodiak et à Afognak par Alphonse Pinart «ou par un de ses informateurs» (p. 133).

Dans le chapitre *Kodiak ou la transformation inattendue*, Emmanuel Désveaux déplore que l'art sugpiaq soit resté dans l'ombre et remarque pertinemment que les Sugpiaq brûlaient systématiquement leurs masques au terme des cérémonies. Il trace ensuite un portrait de la société sugpiaq qui comprenait une aristocratie, des roturiers et des esclaves (p. 95). En fait, «leurs rituels et leur organisation sociale fortement hiérarchisée les rapprochaient des groupes de la Côte Nord-Ouest, et plus particulièrement, de leurs voi-

sins méridionaux, les Tlingit» (p. 93). De plus, contrairement à leurs voisins yupik, les Sugpiaq avaient un mode de vie sédentaire. On y apprend aussi que les baleiniers sugpiaq formaient une confrérie et vivaient en retrait de la société. Pinart a d'ailleurs décrit une des grottes de baleiniers contenant les momies de leurs confrères. Dans la deuxième partie de son chapitre, Désveaux compare les Sugpiaq aux Yupik et aux Indiens de l'intérieur, et présente un modèle de leur société fondé «sur l'antagonisme maximal entre hiérarchie et confrérie, entre concentration et dispersion, entre féminin et masculin, entre a-saisonnalité et saisonnalité, entre vie et mort» (p. 106). Suit ensuite une brillante analyse des masques sugpiaq décrits en général comme «introvertis» et dont certains sont assimilés à des «décors transitionnels entre l'abstraction et la figuration» (p. 116). Deux formes récurrentes sont isolées: la pointe et l'ouverture buccale parfaitement circulaire. La première faisant référence à la pointe de lance des baleiniers et la deuxième, au vent et au souffle.

On remarquera qu'à part la description des masques nos 988-2-141 et 988-2-145 du catalogue raisonné, aucun auteur n'a commenté le fait que certains masques[4] ont l'oeil gauche fermé (ou plus petit) et l'oeil droit ouvert, semblable ici à la grimace que les Inuit d'Igloolik adressaient au Soleil lors de sa réapparition en janvier (voir Saladin d'Anglure 1990). Puisqu'il n'y a pas de période de grande noirceur dans l'archipel Kodiak, on peut se demander quelle est la fonction symbolique d'un tel clin d'oeil. Le thème du «masque de la dichotomie lumière/ténèbres ou jour/nuit» (no. 988-2-195), qui ne comporte toutefois aucune ouverture pour les yeux, le nez ou la bouche, serait une piste à suivre.

Dans *Nouvelle vie des masques à Kodiak aujourd'hui*, Sven Haakanson Jr. (directeur de l'Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository à Kodiak) explique qu'après deux siècles de domination russe puis américaine, les Sugpiaq ont perdu leurs traditions et coutumes mais que depuis les dix dernières années, ils oeuvrent à se les réapproprier. Haakanson compare brièvement la collection Pinart à celle du Musée aluttiq et signale que grâce aux données archéologiques et ethnologiques – en particulier les masques et notes de la collection Pinart – les Sugpiaq peuvent renouer avec leurs traditions.

Malgré quelques coquilles dans les références et un système quelque peu compliqué pour l'identification des photographies, ce livre deviendra un ouvrage de référence dans l'étude des masques inuit et nord-américains. Espérons qu'une traduction anglaise sera bientôt disponible pour les Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) et Unangan qui voudraient comprendre ce que sont devenus ces masques mais aussi dans quel contexte ils étaient utilisés. Enfin, ce livre est un excellent complément à la récente publication de Crowell et al. (2001) sur les Alutiiq.

Notes

1 Torres doute même que Pinart ait vraiment produit les 700 pages de légendes en aléoute et en russe mentionnées à

James Pilling pour la bibliographie sur la langue inuit que ce dernier publiera en 1887.

2 Hamy deviendra en 1878 le fondateur du Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro à Paris. Le nom d'Alphonse Pinard (sic) apparaît d'ailleurs sous la liste des bienfaiteurs de ce musée dans l'escalier de Paris (voir Dias, 1991: Pl. III).

3 On s'étonnera qu'Uyak ne soit pas indiqué dans la carte du livre. Dans les années 1930, l'anthropologue Ales Hrdlicka y entreprit la fouille de 756 sépultures; une entreprise colossale pour l'époque et sans aucun égard aux habitants de Larsen Bay. En 1991 ces derniers réussiront à obtenir de la Smithsonian Institution toutes les sépultures et les objets qui les accompagnaient afin qu'ils soient réenterrés (voir Bray et Killion, 1994).

4 Ajoutons aussi les masques 988-2-158, 988-2-183, 988-2-184 et possiblement 988-2-168 et 988-2-173.

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Reviewer: *Marilyn Gates*
Simon Fraser University

"Living together" to most North Americans means some form of co-habitation, especially as sexual partners, without being married to each other. As such, it is a private, domestic arrangement, although it may be widely known among family and friends and even to more casual acquaintances in the public sphere. Ultimately, though, it is no one's business other than the consenting adults involved how and with whom they live within the confines of their own four walls. It is a personal decision undertaken by individuals in dyadic contracts.

The equivalent Latino term "convivencia," on the other hand, involves both broader and deeper connotations of "liv-

ing together" as interactions and mutual involvement in the course of occupation of a common space in everyday lives. Not confined to the home and family, "convivencia" permeates the public places where social life is conducted as diverse individuals often previously unknown to each other actively construct community as part of the working out of identity politics. In this way, "convivencia" can connote a level of intimacy and shared experience far beyond the narrow confines of the non-Latino urban experience. It is an ongoing, collective, polyadic process of negotiating multiple sites of cultural-meaning construction.

In *Hispanas de Queens: Latino Panethnicity in a New York City Neighborhood*, Milagros Ricourt and Ruby Danta ask what happens when women of diverse Latin American nationalities reside in the same neighbourhood? Focussing on "convivencia diaria," or daily-life interaction, Ricourt and Danta show how immigrant women—Columbian, Cuban, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Uruguayan, and others—who live together in Corona, a working-class neighborhood in Queens, have constructed a new pan-Latino identity from these mundane encounters. This new overarching identity does not simply replace one's self-identification as an immigrant from a particular country. Rather, these repeated intersections between individuals from various nations may foster cultural exchange, syncretisms and other selective adaptations and resistances and forge an additional identity that can be mobilized by Latino panethnic leaders and organizations. This book analyzes the social forces that structure this identity-creation process in both the everyday interactions and the organizational and institutional life of immigrants currently residing in Corona and elsewhere in Queens, emphasizing four critical factors—Spanish language, geographic propinquity, class and gender.

The book is organized in two parts. Part 1 deals with the roots of experiential Latino panethnicity as it is constructed from "convivencia diaria," the routine exchanges and associations of everyday living in apartments and houses, on the streets, in stores, in workplaces, in playgrounds, at fiestas, in hospitals, in parks, at sporting events and in both Catholic and Protestant churches. Part 2 examines how Latino leaders, often middle-class and female, have built on these grassroots foundations emergent Latino panethnic organizations and an embryonic Latino political voice in Corona and Queens, within social service organizations, in cultural activities and in formal politics. First, from the bottom up, experientially, then, subsequently, from the top down, institutionally, a new, pan-Latino presence gains momentum as a force to be reckoned with both in local and national political arenas. The concluding chapter reflects on the roles of women in the creation of Latino panethnicity as experiential forms of identity construction extend to organizational expressions of community self-designation via a "female consciousness" centred in their obligations to nurture, and to preserve and protect their families and neighborhoods.

Hispanas de Queens is a richly textured ethnography, the product of fieldwork spanning almost 20 years beginning in the mid-1980s. The authors take care to position themselves as researchers so that we can appreciate their relationships to their informants. Initial reluctance by some to talk about their immigration, work and everyday life turned to acceptance as Ricourt and Danta, Latinas themselves, lived their own lives as women alongside their informants. The ethnographers, in essence, practiced convivencia diaria by living common experiences such as pregnancy and the quest for affordable housing, by picnics in the park, in conversations with roommates, by needing babysitters, through sitting on the sidewalk on hot summer nights.

In addition to the vivid participant observation yielded by this situatedness of entering the everyday existence of Corona women, the research methodology included intensive interviews, surveys, questionnaires and amazingly extensive fieldnotes. This methodological triangulation together with the historical perspectives gained from extended fieldwork renders "Hispanas de Queens" a remarkably comprehensive, longitudinal and "authentic" portrait of New York Latina lives. This is particularly the case when the women tell in their own words of coming to America and coping with the challenges of making a new life. However, at times the level of detailed reporting of the minutiae of Corona life tends to eclipse the eloquence of the individual stories. Also, some of the ethnographic material from the 1980s seems more dated than historically relevant in this context.

In contrast to the rich ethnographic record, the conceptual framework seems minimally developed. In part, this may be because research on Latin American New Yorkers to date has concentrated on particular national groups, or comparative studies of two or more groups. Furthermore, fieldwork-based studies of Latino panethnicity were not conducted until relatively recently, and these tend to concentrate on social interactions in one particular setting, rather than along several dimensions, or downplay cultural and interpersonal factors. Another reason for the limited theoretical discussion may be the particular open-ended, fieldwork-intensive, ethnographic paradigm espoused.

Ricourt and Danta set out to account for Latino panethnicity as both the product of convivencia diaria and at the organizational level along four dimensions. First, they document experiential panethnicity in the daily life settings of residence, neighborhood and workplace, next the categorical panethnicity which emerges in these settings as people come to see each other as hispanos or latinoamericanos, rather than Dominicans or Puerto Ricans. Thirdly, they describe the institutional panethnicity that emerges when religious congregations, senior citizens' centres, social service programs, cultural organizations and political groups are created by leaders to serve all Latinos in the neighborhood or borough. Lastly, they characterize the ideological panethnicity voiced by these leaders. Ricourt and Dante more than fulfil their stated conceptual goals as the reader emerges with a clear

picture of Latino panethnicity as both unconscious everyday production and as conscious political acts and sees the linkages between the two. However, we do not get far beyond this realization, as many questions remain unanswered such as: why are women more involved as leaders of panethnic organizations while male leaders predominate in single-nationality associations; what are Corona's Latino men doing while the women engage in convivencia diaria; how does women's participation in Latino organizations and formal politics affect gender relations overall; and, how does the Latino panethnic movement in the United States compare to identity politics in panethnic movements elsewhere (such as the Central American pan-Maya movement which has taken off in the globalization era as international, national and local factors have opened up new venues of ethnic expression)?

Nonetheless, *Hispanas de Queens* is an important contribution to studies of the intersections of ethnicity and gender in particular, as well as to Latino Studies in general. It stands as a methodological model for highly positioned and well-triangulated ethnography and paves the way for more comparative work on what fosters or impedes the creation of Latino panethnicity in other North American cities.

Owain Jones and Paul Cloke, *The Place of Trees and Trees in Their Place*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002, xii + 252 pages (paper).

Reviewer: *Wayne Fife*
Memorial University of Newfoundland

I originally encountered this book as part of a reading group at Memorial University. I took extensive notes on it before we met and what follows is to be taken as my own opinion, but that opinion has inevitably been influenced by the lively discussion that this work engendered among our group. Reaction to the book ranged from not liking it very much at all to deciding that it usefully considered a number of issues related to human and non-human agency, questions about re-conceptualizing "nature," and why human beings have such an attachment to "place." One thing that we discovered in our discussion was that the differences in our perceptions of the book were partially related to why each of us was reading it. Those who read it more as "just another book" and compared it to other theoretical works concerning poststructuralism, network theory, and/or political ecology tended to be least satisfied with it; while those who read it as a work that pertained more directly to research problems that they were currently engaging with tended to feel that they gained far more from it. As I am currently involved in research associated with national parks and other issues relating to nature tourism, I was the member of the group who most found *Tree Cultures* to be useful, as it helped me think through a number of important issues related to political ecology in general and national

parks in particular (although national parks are not part of the book's overt agenda). I would, therefore, recommend this book primarily to researchers struggling first hand with issues involving relationships between humans and the non-human world, especially those that revolve around organic entities such as trees or other non-conscious beings.

Tree Cultures can be divided into two main parts. Part 1 is entitled "Placing Trees in Cultural Theory" and Part 2 "Trees in their Place." In the second part, four case studies from England (involving an orchard, a cemetery, a heritage trail, and a town square) are used to illustrate how some of the concepts discussed in Part 1 can be put into practice in actual research situations.

So many concepts are discussed in Part 1 that only a few of them can be considered here. Primarily, the authors are interested in the issue of non-human agency and whether other organic and non-organic entities can be considered to have agency in the world. Their clear answer to this question is yes. "Nature 'pushes back' and injects its own materiality and dynamism into what [David] Harvey terms 'socio-ecological processes'" (p. 30). In explaining why and how they have arrived at this answer, Jones and Cloke are careful to steer away from anthropomorphic romanticism or suggestions that trees, or other similar elements of nature, are "just like humans" in their agency. Instead they make the case that the key feature of "intentionality" in human agency needs to be replaced with the notion of "purposefulness" in the case of non-human agency. Purposefulness in relation to trees, for example, has to do with "fulfillment of their embodied tendencies to grow in certain ways and to reproduce" (p. 7). As an illustration of this principle, in a case study chapter on Arnos Vale Cemetery (a Victorian cemetery in Bristol), they show that a variety of tree species that were originally planted as an adjunct to the human enjoyment of the cemetery (which was used extensively for walking) became "wild" over time and self-seeded new trees to such an extent that by the contemporary period thousands of gravesites had been destroyed or altered by trees and the overall character of the cemetery irrevocably changed. This leads the authors to state: "The agency of trees in Arnos Vale has clearly been an active co-constituent in the changing nature and contested cultures of the place" (p. 152).

One of the points Jones and Cloke make is that such non-human entities as trees have been largely overlooked when we consider agency because of the limited notions we normally apply to both scale and time when considering the effects of agents. They point out, for example, "On the cosmic scale, and in geological time, human activity and agency produce little by way of transformative or creative agency"(p. 55). On this scale of activity, or even over a few hundred or a few thousand years, non-human agency can often be of equal or greater significance than human agency in a specific geographical area.

Not all of the core concepts are dealt with as adequately in the book (i.e. are as clearly stated and illustrated through

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the use of apposite examples). All the members of our reading group, for example, agreed that we could not figure out the difference between what the authors meant by the term "place" versus what they meant by the term "dwelling"— despite the substantial amounts of space each concept took up in the book. In addition, anthropologists all, we were equally disenchanted with the authors' rather shallow usage of the concept of culture.

However, I found so many useful and interesting ideas and case material in the book that I "forgave" these weaknesses (though some of my fellow literary travellers did not). To use one illustration, I was fascinated by discussions about how individual trees took on public identities and became "personalities" in their own right, the way many people in Britain categorize "alien" trees versus "native" trees (partially related to racism and other forms of human stereotyping—e.g., "conifers as communists"), and how the authors differentiated between "working trees" and "wild trees." In the latter case, Jones and Cloke inform us that "working trees," such as fruit-bearing orchard trees or trees planted for industrial or other human purposes, face much greater dangers and have substantially shorter life spans than "wild" trees. There are also great differences between urban and rural trees and they cite studies (p. 202) that tell us, for example, that urban trees live an average of only 32 years compared to 150 years for rural trees, and that 50% of newly planted trees in urban areas die within their first year because of traffic pollution, road-clearing salt, soil compaction from roadways, and other causes. Clearly, human beings are not the only living entities that are subjected to extreme inequities among their own kind due to forces entirely beyond individualized control.

The thinking of Jones and Cloke is very much informed by the historical geography of David Harvey, cyborg theory of Donna Haraway, network theory of Bruno Latour and ecological anthropology of Tim Ingold. These influences are key for understanding the authors' viewpoints about relational agency. "In these approaches, the view of the individual as separate and autonomous is unsustainable, and therefore the notion of separate autonomous creativity is equally so. Creative agency is to be found collectively and relationally embedded" (p. 56). This idea is important for Jones and Cloke because of their desire to destabilize not only liberal humanistic notions of individual human agency, but also assumptions about the superiority of human versus non-human agency. In this sense, trees are merely their excuse for taking on numerous scientific and philosophical sacred cows in regard to human/non-human relationships, culminating in a whole chapter that is devoted to the topic of a "new deal" for the ethical treatment of non-human agents such as trees.

Despite its imperfections, in my opinion this book is a very useful "introduction" to a large number of issues important for understanding the political ecology of human/non-human relationships and should be read by researchers

interested in such topics as rural vs. urban control over natural resources, issues of production and consumption related to nature tourism, and the creation of "natural" areas in both urban and rural spaces.

Ellen Bielawski, *Rogue Diamonds: The Search for Northern Riches on Dene Land,* Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2003, 256 pages.

Reviewer: *Sally Cole*
Concordia University

Ellen Bielawski builds on early classic experiments in reflexive anthropological writing on the Canadian north in *Rogue Diamonds,* a critical and personal account of her years working as anthropologist, researcher and treaty negotiator with the Akaitcho Treaty 8 Dene of Lutsëlk'e. Following on Hugh Brody's one-man tradition of writing the political landscape of the Canadian north in *The People's Land* (1975) and *Maps and Dreams* (1981), on Jean Briggs' writing of the emotional landscapes of northern family and community life in *Never in Anger* (1970) and Frederica de Laguna's personal response to the northern land itself in *Voyage to Greenland* (1977), Bielawski crafts a reflexive ethnography around the meeting of miners, bureaucrats, Dene, and non-Native consultants during the events surrounding the development of Canada's first diamond mine. She compresses a narrative of greed and spirituality, of bad faith and good faith—the Janus face of the human condition—into the time line of the sixty-day "countdown" from August 6, 1996, when Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin gave conditional approval to the Ekati diamond mine. The approval was subject to "significant progress" in reaching agreements between Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. of Australia (BHP, the mining company), the First Nations, the Inuit and the Northwest Territories government—in 60 days. In the book, chapters that closely follow the events of those 60 days alternate with essays on Dene history and culture.

The Dene of Lutsëlk'e are no strangers to development. The 300 speakers of Dëne Sûlin yati (called Chipewyan in English) who live on a granite point on the east arm of Great Slave Lake 180 kilometres east of Yellowknife worked in the fur trade as "the migrant workers of their hunting grounds" (p. 37) from the early 1700s until the most recent collapse of the fur market in the 1990s. For more than a century, Dene have worked as stakers for prospectors "large and small [who] have long relied on local labour to carry out the unskilled parts of the mineral exploration business" (p. 27). Dene witnessed the gold rush in the 1930s which led to the founding of the city of Yellowknife itself on Dene land. Oil extraction began shortly after 1930 at Norman Wells on the Mackenzie River as did uranium mining at points all along the Mackenzie River drainage in which "Dene went to work

moving burlap bags of radioactive ore on and off barges up and down the Mackenzie River, along what became known as the uranium road" (p. 38). By the 1990s, Lutsëlk'e's cancer rate was three times what might be expected for a community of its size. Lead zinc mining followed uranium in the 1950s, tungsten in the 1970s. In 1991 diamonds were discovered 300 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife under a small lake near Lac de Gras in the Coppermine River drainage system. The announcement triggered the biggest staking rush the world has ever seen—bigger than California and the Klondike gold rushes, bigger than the rush to South Africa for diamonds. Lac de Gras lies on the migration route of the Bathurst caribou herd, the winter food of the Akaitcho Dene. Dene knowledge connects Lac de Gras to the watershed of Desnéthché, the sacred river of the Dene and the site of an annual pilgrimage, the Spiritual Gathering of the Lutsëlk'e Dene at Old Woman Falls.

Rogue Diamonds explores the various ways that Dene have responded "to all this searching for and selling stuff that didn't move or grow" (p. 39). They seek to negotiate relationships with each new intrusion while daily fighting with legacies of poverty and disease. They face new challenges of conflicts between youth and elders and between "the money faction" and those who want more information about long-term impacts before agreeing to proposed developments. Age-old rivalries between Treaty 8 Dene and Treaty 11 Dogrib are fed and new divisions among Treaty 8 Dene are created by the division-of-spoils approach taken by developers who give out royalties and jobs to those who pose the least resistance. Throughout a history of change and "the search for northern riches" there have been only two constants: the people and the land. And this is the heart of Bielawski's story. It's not about the diamonds. Diamonds are just the latest "bit player" in a story of a land and its people. And here lies the rub and the heart of the book in which "the land is the protagonist."

It's a macabre dance. The Dene keep alive their relationship to their land and to one another through communal rituals of renewal: the annual Spiritual Gathering at Old Woman Falls; community "sweats" on the beach in Lutsëlk'e; communal work groups whether berry-picking or caribou hunting, or working under government-imposed deadlines and piles of paper in the First Nations office. The Canadian government continues a strategy of avoidance. It delays appointing a negotiator to establish community rights to land and to gain a livelihood from the land as promised in Treaty 8 in 1899. Meanwhile, it continues effectively to extinguish Aboriginal title by granting licenses for developments that build roads and air strips, pollute rivers and air and desecrate the land. And, it establishes impossibly short, urgent deadlines to which the Dene must respond or they are deemed to have shown "no interest."

This dance is presented through rich prose in a book that effectively combines the scientific rigour of ethnographic field observation and recording with a moving narrative of daily life in a 21st-century Dene community. Some of the most innovative ethnography is found in Bielawski's descriptions of the workings of bureaucracy. Her account, for example, of the Dene meeting with the Northwest Territories Water Board which sought to grant a Class A water license to BHP, the diamond company (before an environmental assessment hearing, before negotiating impact and benefits agreements with the Dogrib and Dene, and before the Canadian government's official approval of the mine development) takes us into the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife. Here, through interpreters, Dene chiefs and elders communicate their relationship to, and concerns about, water—the river—and water experts communicate to Dene their concerns to maintain pH levels and their plans to "dewater" lakes. In a deadpan voice that belies her acute observation skills, Bielawski reproduces the dialogue in all its tragi-comical meanderings, contradictions and inevitability. "The public hearing" she writes, "is akin to trucking heavy equipment over the ice road: slow and deceptively smooth. Concentrating on the presentations is essential, otherwise interminable boredom might blind you to sudden hazard" (p. 68). Subsequent chapters record similar dynamics of Dene meetings with mining company executives, Department of Fisheries biologists and Department of Indian and Northern Affairs officials. The plot line is oppressively familiar. Chief Darrell Beaulieu summarizes: "the government [gets] the royalties, the shareholders [get] their cash and the First Nations [get] the shaft" (p. 158). The resilience of the Dene is awesome.

Rogue Diamonds is highly readable and recommended for undergraduate teaching in courses in introductory anthropology, First Nations studies, ethnographic writing, and applied anthropology.

Note to Contributors / Note à l'intention des auteurs

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   1992   *Ethnobiological Classification: Principles of Categorization of Plants and Animals in Traditional Societies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Descola, P., and G. Palsson
   1996   *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives*, London and New York: Routledge.

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   1986   L'anthropologie de la maladie, *L'Homme*, 26(1-2) : 15.
Clément, D.
   1955   *La zoologie des Montagnais*, Paris, Louvain : Selaf-Peeters.

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